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ORATION ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER  
OF GILBERT MOTIER DE LAFAYETTE  
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#7:  
ORATION

ON

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

GILBERT MOTIER DE LAFAYETTE.

DELIVERED

AT THE REQUEST OF BOTH HOUSES OF THE CONGRESS  
OF THE UNITED STATES,

BEFORE THEM,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AT WASHINGTON,

ON THE 31ST OF DECEMBER, 1834.

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BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE.

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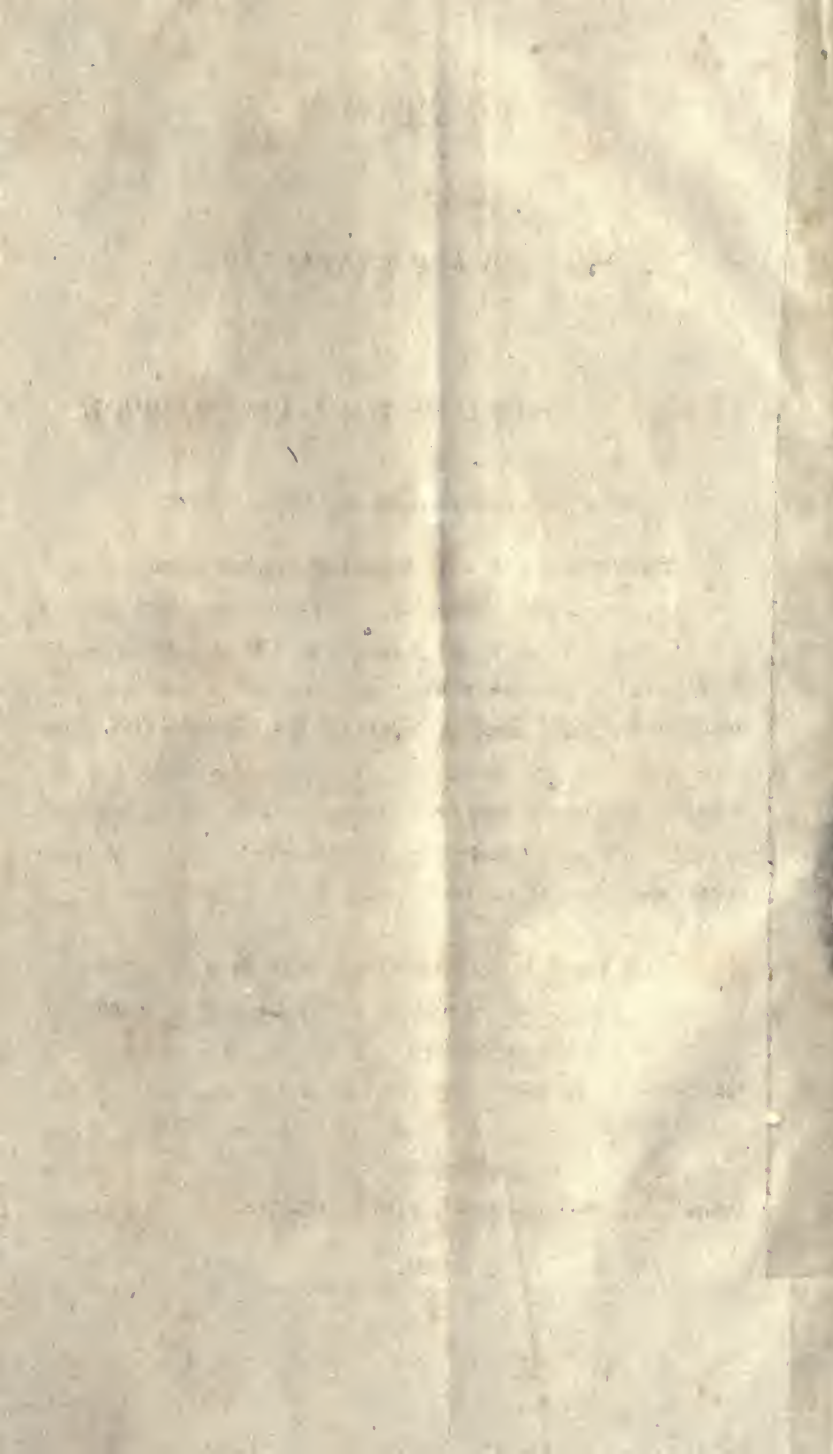
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1835.





## ORATION.

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*Fellow-citizens of the Senate and*

*House of Representatives of the United States :*

IF the authority by which I am now called to address you is one of the highest honors that could be conferred upon a citizen of this Union by his countrymen, I cannot dissemble to myself that it embraces at the same time one of the most arduous duties that could be imposed. Grateful to you for the honor conferred upon me by your invitation, a sentiment of irrepressible and fearful diffidence absorbs every faculty of my soul in contemplating the magnitude, the difficulties, and the delicacy of the task which it has been your pleasure to assign to me.

I am to speak to the North American States and People, assembled here in the persons of their honored and confidential Lawgivers and Representatives. I am to speak to them, by their own appointment, upon the Life and Character of a man, whose life was, for nearly threescore years, the history of the civilized world—of a man, of whose character, to say that it is indissolubly identified with the Revolution of our Independence

is little more than to mark the features of his childhood—of a man, the personified image of self-circumscribed liberty. Nor can it escape the most superficial observation, that, in speaking to the fathers of the land upon the Life and Character of LAFAYETTE, I cannot forbear to touch upon topics which are yet deeply convulsing the world, both of opinion and of action. I am to walk between burning ploughshares—to tread upon fires which have not yet even collected cinders to cover them.

If, in addressing their countrymen upon their most important interests, the Orators of Antiquity were accustomed to begin by supplication to their gods that nothing unsuitable to be said or unworthy to be heard might escape from their lips, how much more forcible is my obligation to invoke the favor of Him “who touched Isaiah’s hallowed lips with fire,” not only to extinguish in the mind every conception unadapted to the grandeur and sublimity of the theme, but to draw from the bosom of the deepest conviction thoughts congenial to the merits which it is the duty of the Discourse to unfold, and words not unworthy of the dignity of the Auditory before whom I appear.

In order to form a just estimate of the Life and Character of Lafayette, it may be necessary to advert, not only to the circumstances connected with his birth, education, and lineage, but to the political condition of his country and of Great Britain, her national rival and adversary, at the time of his birth, and during his years of childhood.

On the sixth day of September, one thousand seven hundred

and fifty-seven, the hereditary Monarch of the British Islands was a native of Germany. A rude, illiterate old soldier of the wars for the Spanish succession; little versed even in the language of the Nations over which he ruled; educated to the maxims and principles of the Feudal Law; of openly licentious life, and of moral character far from creditable:—he styled himself, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King; but there was another and real King of France, no better, perhaps worse, than himself, and with whom he was then at war. This was Louis, the fifteenth of the name, great grandson of his immediate predecessor, Louis the Fourteenth, sometimes denominated the Great. These two Kings held their thrones by the law of hereditary succession, variously modified, in France by the Roman Catholic, and in Britain by Protestant Reformed Christianity.

They were at war—chiefly for conflicting claims to the possession of the Western Wilderness of North America—a prize, the capabilities of which are now unfolding themselves with a grandeur and magnificence unexampled in the history of the world; but of which, if the nominal possession had remained in either of the two Princes, who were staking their Kingdoms upon the issue of the strife, the buffalo and the beaver, with their hunter, the Indian savage, would, at this day, have been, as they then were the only inhabitants.

In this war, GEORGE WASHINGTON, then at the age of twenty-four, was on the side of the British German King, a youthful, but heroic combatant; and, in the same war, the



father of Lafayette was on the opposite side, exposing his life in the heart of Germany, for the cause of the King of France.

On that day, the sixth of September, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-seven, was born GILBERT MOTIER DE LAFAYETTE, at the Castle of Chavaniac, in Auvergne, and a few months after his birth his father fell in battle at Minden.

Let us here observe the influence of political institutions over the destinies and the characters of men. George the Second was a German Prince; he had been made King of the British Islands by the accident of his birth: that is to say, because his great grandmother had been the daughter of James the First; that great grandmother had been married to the King of Bohemia, and her youngest daughter had been married to the Elector of Hanover. George the Second's father was her son, and when James the Second had been expelled from his throne and his country by the indignation of his People, who revolted against his tyranny, and when his two daughters who succeeded him had died without issue, George the First, the son of the Electress of Hanover, became King of Great Britain by the settlement of an Act of Parliament, blending together the principle of hereditary succession with that of Reformed Protestant Christianity and the rights of the Church of England.

The throne of France was occupied by virtue of the same principle of hereditary succession, differently modified, and blended with the Christianity of the Church of Rome. From



this line of succession all females were inflexibly excluded. Louis the Fifteenth, at the age of six years, had become the absolute Sovereign of France, because he was the great grandson of his immediate predecessor. He was of the third generation in descent from the preceding King, and by the law of primogeniture engrafted upon that of lineal succession, did, by the death of his ancestor, forthwith succeed, though in childhood, to an absolute throne, in preference to numerous descendants from that same ancestor, then in the full vigor of manhood.

The first reflection that must occur to a rational being, in contemplating these two results of the principle of hereditary succession, as resorted to for designating the rulers of Nations, is, that two persons more unfit to occupy the thrones of Britain and of France, at the time of their respective accessions, could scarcely have been found upon the face of the Globe—George the Second, a foreigner, the son and grandson of foreigners, born beyond the seas, educated in uncongenial manners, ignorant of the Constitution, of the Laws, even of the Language of the People over whom he was to rule; and Louis the Fifteenth, an infant, incapable of discerning his right hand from his left. Yet, strange as it may sound to the ear of unsophisticated reason, the British Nation were wedded to the belief that this act of settlement, fixing their Crown upon the heads of this succession of total strangers, was the brightest and most glorious exemplification of their national freedom; and not less strange, if aught in the imperfection of human reason could seem strange, was that deep conviction of the French People, at the same period, that *their* chief glory and happiness consisted in the vehemence of

their affection for their King, because he was descended in an unbroken male line of genealogy from Saint Louis.

One of the fruits of this line of hereditary succession, modified by sectarian principles of religion, was to make peace and war, the happiness or misery of the People of the British Empire, dependent upon the fortunes of the Electorate of Hanover—the personal domain of their imported King. This was a result calamitous alike to the People of Hanover, of Britain, and of France; for it was *one* of the two causes of that dreadful war then waging between them; and as the cause, so was this a principal theatre of that disastrous war. It was at Minden, in the heart of the Electorate of Hanover, that the father of Lafayette fell, and left him an orphan, a victim to that war and to the principle of hereditary succession from which it emanated.

Thus, then, it was on the 6th of September, 1757, the day when Lafayette was born. The Kings of France and Britain were seated upon their thrones by virtue of the principle of hereditary succession, variously modified and blended with different forms of religious faith, and they were waging war against each other, and exhausting the blood and treasure of their People for causes in which neither of the Nations had any beneficial or lawful interest.

In this war the father of Lafayette fell in the cause of his King, but not of his country. He was an officer of an invading army, the instrument of his Sovereign's wanton ambition and lust of conquest. The People of the Electorate of Hanover

had done no wrong to him or to his country. When his son came to an age capable of understanding the irreparable loss that he had suffered, and to reflect upon the causes of his father's fate, there was no drop of consolation mingled in the cup from the consideration that he had died for his country. And when the youthful mind was awakened to meditation upon the rights of Mankind, the principles of Freedom, and theories of Government, it cannot be difficult to perceive, in the illustrations of his own family records, the source of that *aversion to hereditary rule*, perhaps the most distinguishing feature of his political opinions, and to which he adhered through all the vicissitudes of his life.

In the same war, and at the same time, George Washington was armed, a loyal subject, in support of his King; but to him that was also the cause of his country. His commission was not in the army of George the Second, but issued under the authority of the Colony of Virginia, the province in which he received his birth. On the borders of that province, the war in its most horrid forms was waged—not a war of mercy, and of courtesy, like that of the civilized embattled Legions of Europe; but war to the knife—the war of Indian savages, terrible to man, but more terrible to the tender sex, and most terrible to helpless infancy. In defence of his country against the ravages of such a war, Washington in the dawn of manhood had drawn his sword, as if Providence, with deliberate purpose, had sanctified for him the practice of war, all-detestable and unhallowed as it is, that he might in a cause virtuous and exalted by its motive and its end, be trained and fitted in a congenial school



to march in aftertimes the leader of heroes in the war of his country's Independence.

At the time of the birth of Lafayette, this war which was to make him a fatherless child, and in which Washington was laying broad and deep in the defence and protection of his native land the foundations of his unrivalled renown, was but in its early stage. It was to continue five years longer, and was to close with the total extinguishment of the colonial dominion of France on the Continent of North America. The deep humiliation of France, and the triumphant ascendancy on this Continent of her rival, were the first results of this great national conflict. The complete expulsion of France from North America seemed, to the superficial vision of men, to fix the British power over these extensive regions on foundations immovable as the everlasting hills.

Let us pass in imagination a period of only twenty years, and alight upon the borders of the river Brandywine. Washington is Commander-in-chief of the armies of the United States of America—war is again raging in the heart of his native land—hostile armies, of one and the same name, blood, and language, are arrayed for battle on the banks of the stream; and Philadelphia, where the United States are in Congress assembled, and whence their Decree of Independence has gone forth, is the destined prize to the conflict of the day. Who is that tall slender youth, of foreign air and aspect, scarcely emerged from the years of boyhood and fresh from the walls of a college, fighting, a volunteer, at the side of Washington,

bleeding, unconsciously to himself, and rallying his men to secure the retreat of the scattered American ranks? It is GILBERT MOTIER DE LAFAYETTE!—the son of the victim of Minden! and he is bleeding in the cause of North American Independence and of Freedom.

We pause one moment to inquire what was this cause of North American Independence, and what were the motives and inducements to the youthful stranger to devote himself, his life, and fortune, to it.

The People of the British Colonies in North America, after a controversy of ten years' duration with their Sovereign beyond the seas, upon an attempt by him and his Parliament to tax them without their consent, had been constrained by necessity to declare themselves independent—to dissolve the tie of their allegiance to him—to renounce their right to his protection, and to assume their station among the independent civilized Nations of the Earth. This had been done with a deliberation and solemnity unexampled in the history of the world—done in the midst of a civil war, differing in character from any of those which for centuries before had desolated Europe. The war had arisen upon a question between the rights of the People and the powers of their Government. The discussions in the progress of the controversy had opened to the contemplations of men the first foundations of civil society and of government. The war of Independence began by litigation upon a petty stamp on paper, and a tax of three pence a pound upon tea; but these broke up the fountains of the great deep, and the deluge ensued. Had the

British Parliament *the right* to tax the People of the Colonies in another hemisphere, not represented in the Imperial Legislature? They affirmed they had: the People of the Colonies insisted they had not. There were ten years of pleading before they came to an issue; and all the legitimate sources of power and all the primitive elements of freedom, were scrutinized, debated, analyzed, and elucidated, before the lighting of the torch of Ate, and her cry of havoc upon letting slip the dogs of war.

When the day of conflict came, the issue of the contest was necessarily changed. The People of the Colonies had maintained the contest on the principle of resisting the invasion of chartered rights—first by argument and remonstrance; and finally by appeal to the sword. But with the war came the necessary exercise of sovereign powers. The Declaration of Independence justified itself as the only possible remedy for insufferable wrongs. It seated itself upon the first foundations of the law of nature, and the incontestable doctrine of human rights. There was no longer any question of the constitutional powers of the British Parliament, or of violated colonial charters. Thenceforward the American Nation supported its existence by war; and the British Nation by war was contending for conquest. As between the two parties the single question at issue was Independence—but in the confederate existence of the North American Union, LIBERTY—not only their own liberty, but the vital principle of liberty to the whole race of civilized man was involved.

It was at this stage of the conflict, and immediately after the Declaration of Independence, that it drew the attention, and



called into action the moral sensibilities and the intellectual faculties of Lafayette, then in the nineteenth year of his age.

The war was revolutionary. It began by the dissolution of the British Government in the Colonies, the People of which were by that operation left without any Government whatever. They were then at one and the same time maintaining their independent national existence by war, and forming new social compacts for their own government thenceforward. The construction of civil society; the extent and the limitations of organized power; the establishment of a system of government combining the greatest enlargement of individual liberty with the most perfect preservation of public order, were the continual occupations of every mind. The consequences of this state of things to the history of mankind, and especially to Europe, were foreseen by none. Europe saw nothing but the war—a People struggling for liberty and against oppression; and the People in every part of Europe sympathized with the People of the American Colonies.

With their governments it was not so. The people of the American Colonies were insurgents—all Governments abhor insurrection—they were revolted colonists. The great maritime Powers of Europe had Colonies of their own, to which the example of resistance against oppression might be contagious. The American Colonies were stigmatized in all the official acts of the British Government as *rebels*; and rebellion to the governing part of mankind is as the sin of witchcraft. The Governments of Europe therefore, were, at heart, on the side of the British Govern-

ment in this war, and the People of Europe were on the side of the American People.

Lafayette, by his position and condition in life, was one of those who, governed by the ordinary impulses which influence and control the conduct of men, would have sided in sentiment with the British or Royal cause.

Lafayette was born a subject of the most absolute and most splendid Monarchy of Europe, and in the highest rank of her proud and chivalrous Nobility. He had been educated at a college of the University of Paris, founded by the royal munificence of Louis the Fourteenth, or of his Minister Cardinal Richelieu. Left an orphan in early childhood, with the inheritance of a princely fortune, he had been married at sixteen years of age to a daughter of the house of Noailles, the most distinguished family of the Kingdom—scarcely deemed in public consideration inferior to that which wore the Crown. He came into active life, at the change from boy to man, a husband and a father, in the full enjoyment of every thing that avarice could covet, with a certain prospect before him of all that ambition could crave. Happy in his domestic affections, incapable from the benignity of his nature of envy, hatred, or revenge, a life of “ignoble ease and indolent repose” seemed to be that which nature and fortune had combined to prepare before him. To men of ordinary mould this condition would have led to a life of luxurious apathy and sensual indulgence. Such was the life into which, from the operation of the same causes, Louis the Fifteenth had sunk, with his household and

Court, while Lafayette was rising to manhood, surrounded by the contamination of their example. Had his natural endowments been even of the higher and nobler order of such as adhere to virtue, even in the lap of prosperity and in the bosom of temptation, he might have lived and died a pattern of the Nobility of France, to be classed in aftertimes with the Turennes and the Montausiers of the age of Louis the Fourteenth, or with the Villars of the Lamoignons of the age immediately preceding his own.

But as in the firmament of Heaven that rolls over our heads, there is among the stars of the first magnitude one so pre-eminent in splendor, as, in the opinion of astronomers, to constitute a class by itself, so in the fourteen hundred years of the French Monarchy among the multitudes of great and mighty men which it has evolved, the name of Lafayette stands unrivalled in the solitude of glory.

In entering upon the threshold of life, a career was to open before him. He had the option of the Court or the Camp. An office was tendered to him in the household of the King's brother, the Count de Provence, since successively a royal Exile and a reinstated King. The servitude and inaction of a Court had no charms for him; he preferred a commission in the army, and, at the time of the Declaration of Independence, was a captain of dragoons in the garrison at Metz.

There, at an entertainment given by his relative the Marechal de Broglie, the Commandant of the place, to the Duke of Gloucester, brother to the British King, and then a transient



traveller through that part of France, he learns, as an incident of intelligence received that morning by the English Prince from London, that the Congress of Rebels at Philadelphia had issued a Declaration of Independence. A conversation ensues upon the causes which have contributed to produce this event, and upon the consequences which may be expected to flow from it. The imagination of Lafayette has caught across the Atlantic tide the spark emitted from the Declaration of Independence; his heart has kindled at the shock; and before he slumbers upon his pillow he has resolved to devote his life and fortune to the cause.

You have before you the cause and the man. The self-devotion of Lafayette was twofold. First, to the people, maintaining a bold and seemingly desperate struggle against oppression, and for national existence. Secondly, and chiefly, to the principles of their Declaration, which then first unfurled before his eyes the consecrated standard of human rights. To that standard, without an instant of hesitation, he repaired. Where it would lead him it is scarcely probable that he himself then foresaw. It was then identical with the stars and stripes of the American Union, floating to the breeze from the Hall of Independence at Philadelphia. Nor sordid avarice, nor vulgar ambition, could point his footsteps to the pathway leading to that banner. To the love of ease or pleasure nothing could be more repulsive. Something may be allowed to the beatings of the youthful breast which make ambition virtue, and something to the spirit of military adventure imbibed from his profession, and which he felt in common with many others. France, Germany, Poland, furnished to the armies of this Union, in our revolutionary

struggle, no inconsiderable number of officers of high rank and distinguished merit. The names of Pulaski and De Kalb are numbered among the martyrs of our freedom, and their ashes repose in our soil side by side with the canonized bones of Warren and of Montgomery. To the virtues of Lafayette a more protracted career and happier earthly destinies were reserved. To the *moral* principle of political action the sacrifices of no other man were comparable to his. Youth, health, fortune; the favor of his King; the enjoyment of ease and pleasure; even the choicest blessings of domestic felicity—he gave them all for toil and danger in a distant land, and an almost hopeless cause; but it was the cause of justice, and of the rights of human kind.

The resolve is firmly fixed, and it now remains to be carried into execution. On the 7th of December, 1776, Silas Deane, then a secret agent of the American Congress at Paris, stipulates with the Marquis de Lafayette that he shall receive a commission, to date from that day, of Major General in the Army of the United States; and the Marquis stipulates in return, to depart when and how Mr. Deane shall judge proper, to serve the United States with all possible zeal without pay or emolument, reserving to himself only the liberty of returning to Europe if his family or his King should recall him.

Neither his family nor his King were willing that he should depart; nor had Mr. Deane the power either to conclude this contract or to furnish the means of his conveyance to America. Difficulties rise up before him only to be dispersed, and obstacles thicken only to be surmounted. The day after the signature of

the contract, Mr. Deane's agency was superseded by the arrival of Doctor Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee as his colleagues in commission ; nor did they think themselves authorized to confirm his engagements. Lafayette is not to be discouraged, The Commissioners extenuate nothing of the unpromising condition of their cause. Mr. Deane avows his inability to furnish him with a passage to the United States. "The more desperate the cause," says Lafayette, "the greater need has it of my services ; and, if Mr. Deane has no vessel for my passage, I shall purchase one myself, and will traverse the Ocean with a selected company of my own !"

Other impediments arise. His design becomes known to the British Ambassador at the Court of Versailles, who remonstrates to the French Government against it. At his instance, orders are issued for the detention of the vessel purchased by the Marquis, and fitted out at Bordeaux, and for the arrest of his person. To elude the first of these orders, the vessel is removed from Bordeaux to the neighboring port of Passage, within the dominion, of Spain. The order for his own arrest is executed ; but by stratagem and disguise he escapes from the custody of those who have him in charge, and before a second order can reach him he is safe on the ocean wave, bound to the land of Independence and of Freedom.

It had been necessary to clear out the vessel for an island of the West Indies ; but once at sea he avails himself of his right as owner of the ship, and compels his captain to steer for the shores of emancipated North America. He lands with his com-



panions, on the 25th of April, 1777, in South Carolina, not far from Charleston, and finds a most cordial reception and hospitable welcome in the house of Major Huger.

Every detail of this adventurous expedition, full of incidents, combining with the simplicity of historical truth all the interest of romance, is so well known and so familiar to the memory of all who hear me, that I pass them over without further notice.

From Charleston he proceeded to Philadelphia, where the Congress of the Revolution were in session, and where he offered his services in the cause. Here again he was met with difficulties, which to men of ordinary minds would have been insurmountable. Mr. Deane's contracts were so numerous, and for offices of rank so high, that it was impossible they should be ratified by the Congress. He had stipulated for the appointment of other Major Generals; and in the same contract with that of Lafayette, for eleven other officers, from the rank of Colonel to that of Lieutenant. To introduce these officers, strangers, scarcely one of whom could speak the language of the country, into the American army, to take rank and precedence over the native citizens whose ardent patriotism had pointed them to the standard of their country, could not, without great injustice, nor without exciting the most fatal dissensions, have been done; and this answer was necessarily given as well to Lafayette as to the other officers who had accompanied him from Europe. His reply was an offer to serve as a volunteer, and without pay. Magnanimity thus disinterested could not be resisted, nor could the sense of it be worthily manifested by a

mere acceptance of the offer. On the 31st of July, 1777, therefore, the following resolution and preamble are recorded upon the Journals of Congress:—

“Whereas the Marquis de Lafayette, out of his great zeal to the cause of Liberty in which the United States are engaged, has left his family and connexions, and at his own expense come over to offer his service to the United States, without pension or particular allowance, and is anxious to risk his life in our cause:

“Resolved, That his service be accepted, and that in consideration of his zeal, illustrious family, and connexions, he have the rank and commission of Major General in the Army of the United States.”

He had the rank and commission, but no command as a Major General. With this, all personal ambition was gratified; and whatever services he might perform, he could attain no higher rank in the American army. The discontents of officers already in the service, at being superseded in command by a stripling foreigner, were disarmed; nor was the prudence of Congress perhaps without its influence in withholding a command, which but for a judgment premature “beyond the slow advance of years,” might have hazarded something of the sacred cause itself, by confidence too hastily bestowed.

The day after the date of his commission he was introduced to Washington, Commander-in-chief of the armies of the Con-

federation. It was the critical period of the campaign of 1777. The British army, commanded by Lord Howe, was advancing from the head of Elk, to which they had been transported by sea from New York, upon Philadelphia. Washington, by a counteracting movement, had been approaching from his line of defence in the Jerseys towards the city, and arrived there on the 1st of August. It was a meeting of congenial souls. At the close of it Washington gave the youthful stranger an invitation to make the head quarters of the Commander-in-Chief his home: that he should establish himself there at his own time, and consider himself at all times as one of his family. It was natural that in giving this invitation he should remark the contrast of the situation in which it would place him, with that of ease, and comfort, and luxurious enjoyment, which he had left, at the splendid Court of Louis the Sixteenth, and of his beautiful and accomplished, but ill-fated Queen, then at the very summit of all which constitutes the common estimate of felicity. How deep and solemn was this contrast! No native American had undergone the trial of the same alternative. None of them, save Lafayette, had brought the same tribute, of his life, his fortune, and his honor, to a cause of a country foreign to his own. To Lafayette the soil of freedom was his country. His post of honor was the post of danger. His fireside was the field of battle. He accepted with joy the invitation of Washington, and repaired forthwith to the Camp. The bond of indissoluble friendship—the friendship of heroes, was sealed from the first hour of their meeting, to last throughout their lives and to live in the memory of mankind forever.



It was perhaps at the suggestion of the American Commissioners in France that this invitation was given by Washington. In a letter from them of the 25th of May, 1777, to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, they announced that the Marquis had departed for the United States in a ship of his own, accompanied by some officers of distinction, in order to serve in our armies. They observe that he is exceedingly beloved, and that every body's good wishes attend him. They cannot but hope that he will meet with such a reception as will make the country and his expedition agreeable to him. They further say that those who censure it as imprudent in him, do nevertheless applaud his spirit; and they are satisfied that civilities and respect shown to him will be serviceable to our cause in France, as pleasing not only to his powerful relations and to the Court, but to the whole French Nation. They finally add, that he had left a beautiful young wife, and for her sake particularly, they hoped that his bravery and ardent desire to distinguish himself would be a little restrained by the General's (Washington's) prudence, so as not to permit his being hazarded much but upon some important occasion.

The head-quarters of Washington, serving as a volunteer with the rank and commission of a Major General without command, was precisely the station adapted to the development of his character, to his own honor, and that of the army, and to the prudent management of the country's cause. To him it was at once a severe school of experience, and a rigorous test of merit. But it was not the place to restrain him from exposure to danger. The time at which he joined the Camp was one of pre-eminent peril. The British Government, and the Commander-in-chief of

the British forces, had imagined that the possession of Philadelphia, combined with that of the line along the Hudson river, from the Canadian frontier to the city of New York, would be fatal to the American cause. By the capture of Burgoyne and his army that portion of the project sustained a total defeat. The final issue of the war was indeed sealed with the capitulation of the 17th of October, 1777, at Saratoga—sealed, not with the subjugation, but with the independence of the North American Union.

In the southern campaign the British commander was more successful. The fall of Philadelphia was the result of the battle of Brandywine, on the 11th of September. This was the first action in which Lafayette was engaged, and the first lesson of his practical military school was a lesson of misfortune. In the attempt to rally the American troops in their retreat, he received a musket ball in the leg. He was scarcely conscious of the wound till made sensible of it by the loss of blood, and even then ceased not his exertions in the field till he had secured and covered the retreat.

This casualty confined him for some time to his bed at Philadelphia, and afterwards detained him some days at Bethlehem; but within six week he rejoined the head-quarters of Washington, near Whitemarsh. He soon became anxious to obtain a command equal to his rank, and in the short space of time that he had been with the Commander-in-chief, had so thoroughly obtained his confidence as to secure an earnest solicitation from him to Congress in his favor. In a letter to Congress of the 1st of November, 1777, he says: "The Marquis de Lafayette is

extremely solicitous of having a command equal to his rank. I do not know in what light Congress will view the matter, but it appears to me, from a consideration of his illustrious and important connexions, the attachment which he has manifested for our cause, and the consequences which his return in disgust might produce, that it will be advisable to gratify him in his wishes; and the more so, as several gentlemen from France, who came over under some assurances, have gone back disappointed in their expectations. His conduct with respect to them stands in a favorable point of view, having interested himself to remove their uneasiness, and urged the impropriety of their making any unfavorable representations upon their arrival at home; and in all his letters he has placed our affairs in the best situation he could. Besides, he is sensible, discreet in his manners, has made great proficiency in our language, and from the disposition he discovered at the battle of Brandywine, possesses a large share of bravery and military ardor."

Perhaps one of the highest encomiums ever pronounced of a man in public life, is that of a historian eminent for his profound acquaintance with mankind, who in painting a great character by a single line says that he was just equal to all the duties of the highest offices which he attained, and never above them. There are in some men qualities which dazzle and consume to little or no valuable purpose. They seldom belong to the great benefactors of mankind. They were not the qualities of Washington, or of Lafayette. The testimonial offered by the American Commander to his young friend, after a probation of several months, and after the severe test of the disastrous day of Brandywine, was precisely adapted to the man in



whose favor it was given, and to the object which it was to accomplish. What earnestness of purpose! what sincerity of conviction! what energetic simplicity of expression! what thorough delineation of character! The merits of Lafayette to the eye of Washington are the candor and generosity of his disposition—the indefatigable industry of application which in the course of a few months has already given him the mastery of a foreign language—good sense—discretion of manners, an attribute not only unusual in early years but doubly rare in alliance with that enthusiasm so signally marked by his self-devotion to the American cause; and, to crown all the rest, the bravery and military ardor so brilliantly manifested at the Brandywine. Here is no random praise; no unmeaning panegyric. This cluster of qualities, all plain and simple, but so seldom found in union together, so generally incompatible with one another, these are the properties eminently trustworthy in the judgment of Washington; and these are the properties which his discernment has found in Lafayette, and which urge him thus earnestly to advise the gratification of his wish by the assignment of a command equal to the rank which had been granted to his zeal and his illustrious name.

The recommendation of Washington had its immediate effect; and on the 1st of December, 1777, it was resolved by Congress that he should be informed it was highly agreeable to Congress that the Marquis de Lafayette should be appointed to the command of a division in the Continental Army.

He received accordingly such an appointment; and a plan was organized in Congress for a second invasion of Canada, at the head

of which he was placed. This expedition, originally projected without consultation with the Commander-in-chief, might be connected with the temporary dissatisfaction, in the community and in Congress, at the ill success of his endeavors to defend Philadelphia, which rival and unfriendly partisans were too ready to compare with the splendid termination, by the capture of Burgoyne and his army, of the Northern campaign, under the command of General Gates. To foreclose all suspicion of participation in these views, Lafayette proceeded to the Seat of Congress, and, accepting the important charge which it was proposed to assign to him, obtained at his particular request that he should be considered as an officer detached from the army of Washington, and to remain under his orders. He then repaired in person to Albany, to take command of the troops who were to assemble at that place, in order to cross the Lakes on the ice, and attack Montreal; but on arriving at Albany he found none of the promised preparations in readiness—they were never effected. Congress some time after relinquished the design, and the Marquis was ordered to rejoin the army of Washington.

In the succeeding month of May, his military talent was displayed by the masterly retreat effected in the presence of an overwhelming superiority of the enemy's force from the position at Barren Hill.

He was soon after distinguished at the battle of Monmouth; and in September, 1778, a resolution of Congress declared their high sense of his services, not only in the field, but in his exertions to conciliate and heal dissensions between the officers of the French fleet under the command of Count d'Estaing and some of the native

officers of our army. These dissensions had arisen in the first moments of co-operation in the service, and had threatened pernicious consequences.

In the month of April, 1776, the combined wisdom of the Count de Vergennes and of M. Turgot, the Prime Minister and the Financier of Louis the Sixteenth, had brought him to the conclusion that the event the most desirable to France with regard to the controversy between Great Britain and her American Colonies, was that the insurrection should be suppressed. This judgment, evincing only the total absence of all *moral* considerations, in the estimate, by these eminent statesmen, of what was desirable to France, had undergone a great change by the close of the year 1777. The Declaration of Independence had changed the question between the parties. The popular feeling of France was all on the side of the Americans. The daring and romantic movement of Lafayette, in defiance of the Government itself, then highly favored by public opinion, was followed by universal admiration. The spontaneous spirit of the people gradually spread itself even over the rank corruption of the Court; a suspicious and deceptive neutrality succeeded to an ostensible exclusion of the Insurgents from the ports of France, till the capitulation of Burgoyne satisfied the casuists of international law at Versailles that the suppression of the insurrection was no longer the most desirable of events; but that the United States were, *de facto*, sovereign and independent; and that France might conclude a Treaty of Commerce with them, without giving just cause of offence to the stepmother country. On the 6th of February, 1778, a Treaty of Commerce between France and the United States was concluded, and with it, on the same day, a



Treaty of eventual Defensive Alliance, to take effect only in the event of Great Britain's resenting by war against France the consummation of the Commercial Treaty. The war immediately ensued, and in the summer of 1778 a French fleet under the command of Count d'Estaing was sent to co-operate with the forces of the United States for the maintenance of their Independence.

By these events the position of the Marquis de Lafayette was essentially changed. It became necessary for him to reinstate himself in the good graces of his Sovereign, offended at his absenting himself from his country without permission, but gratified with the distinction which he had acquired by gallant deeds in a service now become that of France herself. At the close of the campaign of 1778, with the approbation of his friend and patron, the Commander-in-chief, he addressed a letter to the President of Congress, representing his then present circumstances with the confidence of affection and gratitude, observing that the sentiments which bound him to his country could never be more properly spoken of than in the presence of men who had done so much for their own. "As long, continued he, as I thought I could dispose of myself, I made it my pride and pleasure to fight under American colors, in defence of a cause which I dare more particularly call *ours*, because I had the good fortune of bleeding for her. Now, Sir, that France is involved in a war, I am urged, by a sense of my duty, as well as by the love of my country, to present myself before the King, and know in what manner he judges proper to employ my services. The most agreeable of all will always be such as may enable me to serve the common cause among those whose friendship I had the happiness to

obtain, and whose fortune I had the honor to follow in less smiling times. That reason, and others, which I leave to the feelings of Congress, engage me to beg from them the liberty of going home for the next winter.

“As long as there were any hopes of an active campaign, I did not think of leaving the field; now that I see a very peaceable and undisturbed moment, I take this opportunity of waiting on Congress.”

In the remainder of the letter he solicited that, in the event of his request being granted, he might be considered as a soldier on furlough, heartily wishing to regain his colors and his esteemed and beloved fellow-soldiers. And he closes with a tender of any services which he might be enabled to render to the American cause in his own country.

On the receipt of this letter, accompanied by one from General Washington, recommending to Congress, in terms most honorable to the Marquis, a compliance with his request, that body immediately passed resolutions granting him an unlimited leave of absence, with permission to return to the United States at his own most convenient time; that the President of Congress should write him a letter returning him the thanks of Congress for that disinterested zeal which had led him to America, and for the services he had rendered to the United States by the exertion of his courage and abilities on many signal occasions; and that the Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States at the Court of Versailles should be directed to cause an elegant sword, with

proper devices, to be made, and presented to him in the name of the United States. These resolutions were communicated to him in a letter expressive of the sensibility congenial to them, from the President of Congress, Henry Laurens.

He embarked in January, 1779, in the frigate *Alliance*, at Boston, and on the succeeding 12th day of February presented himself at Versailles. Twelve months had already elapsed since the conclusion of the Treaties of Commerce and of eventful Alliance between France and the United States. They had during the greater part of that time been deeply engaged in war with a common cause against Great Britain, and it was the cause in which Lafayette had been shedding his blood: yet, instead of receiving him with open arms, as the pride and ornament of his country, a cold and hollow-hearted order was issued to him not to present himself at Court, but to consider himself under arrest, with permission to receive visits only from his relations. This ostensible mark of the Royal displeasure was to last eight days, and Lafayette manifested his sense of it only by a letter to the Count de Vergennes, inquiring whether the interdiction upon him to receive visits was to be considered as extending to that of Doctor Franklin. The sentiment of universal admiration which had followed him at his first departure, greatly increased by his splendid career of service during the two years of his absence, indemnified him for the indignity of the courtly rebuke.

He remained in France through the year 1779, and returned to the scene of action early in the ensuing year. He continued in the French service, and was appointed to command the King's own regiment of dragoons, stationed during the year in various



parts of the Kingdom, and holding an incessant correspondence with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of War, urging the employment of a land and naval force in aid of the American cause. "The Marquis de Lafayette," says Dr. Franklin, in a letter of the 4th of March, 1780, to the President of Congress, "who, during his residence in France, has been extremely zealous in supporting our cause *on all occasions*, returns again to fight for it. He is infinitely esteemed and beloved here, and I am persuaded will do every thing in his power to merit a continuance of the same affection from America."

Immediately after his arrival in the United States, it was, on the 16th of May, 1780, resolved in Congress, that they considered his return to America to resume his command as a fresh proof of the disinterested zeal and persevering attachment which have justly recommended him to the public confidence and applause, and that they received with pleasure a tender of the further services of so gallant and meritorious an officer.

From this time until the termination of the campaign of 1781, by the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his army at Yorktown, his service was of incessant activity, always signalized by military talents unsurpassed, and by a spirit never to be subdued. At the time of the treason of Arnold, Lafayette was accompanying his Commander-in-chief to an important conference and consultation with the French General, Rochambeau; and then, as in every stage of the war, it seemed as if the position which he occupied, his personal character, his individual relations with Washington, with the officers of both the allied armies, and

with the armies themselves, had been specially ordered to promote and secure that harmony and mutual good understanding indispensable to the ultimate success of the common cause. His position, too, as a foreigner by birth, a European, a volunteer in the American service, and a person of high rank in his native country, pointed him out as peculiarly suited to the painful duty of deciding upon the character of the crime, and upon the fate of the British officer, the accomplice and victim of the detested traitor, Arnold.

In the early part of the campaign of 1781, when Cornwallis with an overwhelming force was spreading ruin and devastation over the Southern portion of the Union, we find Lafayette, with means altogether inadequate, charged with the defence of the Territory of Virginia. Always equal to the emergencies in which circumstances placed him, his expedients for encountering and surmounting the obstacles which they cast in his way are invariably stamped with the peculiarities of his character. The troops placed under his command for the defence of Virginia were chiefly taken from the Eastern regiments, unseasoned to the climate of the South, and prejudiced against it as unfavorable to the health of the natives of the more rigorous regions of the North. Desertions became frequent, till they threatened the very dissolution of the corps. Instead of resorting to military execution to retain his men, he appeals to the sympathies of honor. He states, in general orders, the great danger and difficulty of the enterprize upon which he is about to embark; represents the only possibility by which it can promise success,—the faithful adherence of the soldiers to their chief, and his

confidence that they will not abandon him. He then adds, that if, however, any individual of the detachment was unwilling to follow him, a passport to return to his home should be forthwith granted him upon his application. It is to a cause like that of American Independence that resources like this are congenial. After these general orders, nothing more was heard of desertion. The very cripples of the army preferred paying for their own transportation to follow the corps, rather than to ask for the dismissal which had been made so easily accessible to all.

But how shall the deficiencies of the military chest be supplied? The want of money was heavily pressing upon the service in every direction. Where are the sinews of war? How are the troops to march without shoes, linen, clothing of all descriptions, and other necessities of life? Lafayette has found them all. From the patriotic merchants of Baltimore he obtains on the pledge of his own personal credit, a loan of money adequate to the purchase of the materials; and from the fair hands of the daughters of the Monumental City, even then worthy to be so called, he obtains the toil of making up the needed garments.

The details of the campaign, from its unpromising outset, when Cornwallis the British Commander exulted in anticipation that the boy could not escape him till the storming of the twin redoubts, in emulation of gallantry by the valiant Frenchmen of Viomesnil, and the American fellow-soldiers of Lafayette led by him to victory at Yorktown, must be left to the recording pen



of History. Both redoubts were carried at the point of the sword, and Cornwallis, with averted face, surrendered his sword to Washington.

This was the last vital struggle of the war, which however lingered through another year rather of negotiation than of action. Immediately after the capitulation at Yorktown, Lafayette asked and obtained again a leave of absence to visit his family and his country, and with this closed his military service in the field during the Revolutionary War. But it was not for the individual enjoyment of his renown that he returned to France. The resolutions of Congress accompanying that which gave him a discretionary leave of absence, while honorary in the highest degree to him were equally marked by a grant of virtual credentials for negotiation and by the trust of confidential powers, together with a letter of the warmest commendation of the gallant soldier to the favor of his King. The ensuing year was consumed in preparations for a formidable combined French and Spanish expedition against the British Islands in the West Indies, and particularly the Island of Jamaica; thence to recoil upon New York, and to pursue the offensive war into Canada. The fleet destined for this gigantic undertaking was already assembled at Cadiz; and Lafayette, appointed the chief of the Staff, was there ready to embark upon this perilous adventure, when, on the 30th of November, 1782, the preliminary treaties of peace were concluded between his Britannic Majesty on one part, and the Allied Powers of France, Spain, and the United States of America, on the other. The first intelligence of this event received by the American Congress was in the communication of a letter from Lafayette.

The war of American Independence is closed. The People of the North American Confederation are in union, sovereign and independent. Lafayette at twenty-five years of age has lived the life of a patriarch, and illustrated the career of a hero. Had his days upon earth been then numbered, and had he then slept with his fathers, illustrious as for centuries their names had been, his name to the end of time would have transcended them all. Fortunate youth! fortunate beyond even the measure of his companions in arms with whom he had achieved the glorious consummation of American Independence! His fame was all his own—not cheaply earned—not ignobly won. His fellow-soldiers had been the champions and defenders of their country. They reaped for themselves, for their wives, their children, their posterity to the latest time, the rewards of their dangers and their toils. Lafayette had watched, and labored, and fought, and bled—not for himself, not for his family, not, in the first instance, even for his country. In the legendary tales of Chivalry we read of tournaments at which a foreign and unknown Knight suddenly presents himself, armed in complete steel, and with the vizor down enters the ring to contend with the assembled flower of Knighthood for the prize of honor, to be awarded by the hand of Beauty; bears it in triumph away, and disappears from the astonished multitude of competitors and spectators of the feats of arms. But where in the rolls of History, where in the fictions of Romance, where but in the life of Lafayette, has been seen the noble stranger, flying, with the tribute of his name, his rank, his affluence, his ease, his domestic bliss, his treasure, his blood, to the relief of a suffering and distant land in the hour of her deepest

calamity—baring his bosom to her foes, and not at the transient pageantry of a tournament, but for a succession of five years sharing all the vicissitudes of her fortunes ; always eager to appear at the post of danger—tempering the glow of youthful ardor with the cold caution of a veteran commander ; bold and daring in action ; prompt in execution ; rapid in pursuit ; fertile in expedients ; unattainable in retreat ; often exposed, but never surprised, never disconcerted ; eluding his enemy when within his fancied grasp ; bearing upon him with irresistible sway when of force to cope with him in the conflict of arms ! And what is this but the diary of Lafayette, from the day of his rallying the scattered fugitives of the Brandywine, insensible of the blood flowing from his wound, to the storming of the redoubt at Yorktown !

Henceforth as a public man Lafayette is to be considered as a Frenchman, always active and ardent to serve the United States, but no longer in their service as an officer. So transcendent had been his merits in the common cause, that to reward them the rule of progressive advancement in the armies of France was set aside for him. He received from the Minister of War a notification that from the day of his retirement from the service of the United States as a Major General, at the close of the war, he should hold the same rank in the armies of France, to date from the day of the capitulation of Lord Cornwallis.

Henceforth he is a Frenchman, destined to perform in the history of his country a part as peculiarly his own, and not



less glorious than that which he had performed in the war of Independence. A short period of profound peace followed the great triumph of Freedom. The desire of Lafayette once more to see the land of his adoption and the associates of his glory, the fellow-soldiers who had become to him as brothers, and the friend and patron of his youth who had become to him as a father—sympathizing with their desire once more to see him—to see in their prosperity him who had first come to them in their affliction—induced him in the year 1784 to pay a visit to the United States.

On the 4th of August of that year he landed at New York, and in the space of five months from that time visited his venerable friend at Mount Vernon, where he was then living in retirement, and traversed ten States of the Union; receiving every where, from their Legislative Assemblies, from the Municipal Bodies of the cities and towns through which he passed, from the officers of the army his late associates (now restored to the virtues and occupations of private life), and even from the recent emigrants from Ireland, who had come to adopt for their country the self-emancipated land, addresses of gratulation and of joy—the effusions of hearts grateful in the enjoyment of the blessings for the possession of which they had been so largely indebted to his exertions—and, finally, from the United States of America in Congress assembled at Trenton.

On the 9th of December it was resolved by that body that a committee to consist of one member from each State should

be appointed to receive, and in the name of Congress take leave of the Marquis. That they should be instructed to assure him that Congress continued to entertain the same high sense of his abilities and zeal to promote the welfare of America, both here and in Europe, which they had frequently expressed and manifested on former occasions, and which the recent marks of his attention to their commercial and other interest had perfectly confirmed. "That, as his uniform and unceasing attachment to this country has resembled that of a patriotic citizen, the United States regard him with particular affection, and will not cease to feel an interest in whatever may concern his honor and prosperity, and that their best and kindest wishes will always attend him."

And it was further resolved, that a letter be written to his Most Christian Majesty, to be signed by his Excellency the President of Congress, expressive of the high sense which the United States in Congress assembled entertain of the zeal, talents, and meritorious services of the Marquis de Lafayette, and recommending him to the favor and patronage of his Majesty.

The first of these resolutions was, on the next day, carried into execution. At a solemn interview with the Committee of Congress, received in their Hall, and addressed by the Chairman of their Committee, John Jay, the purport of these resolutions was communicated to him. He replied in terms of fervent sensibility for the kindness manifested personally to himself; and with allusions to the situation, the prospects, and the duties

of the People of this country, he pointed out the great interests which he believed it indispensable to their welfare that they should cultivate and cherish. In the following memorable sentences the ultimate objects of his solicitude are disclosed in a tone deeply solemn and impressive:—

“May this immense Temple of Freedom,” said he, “ever stand, a lesson to oppressors, an example to the oppressed, a sanctuary for the rights of mankind! and may these happy United States attain that complete splendor and prosperity which will illustrate the blessings of their Government, and for ages to come rejoice the departed souls of its founders!”

Fellow-citizens! Ages have passed away since these words were spoken; but ages are the years of the existence of Nations. The founders of this immense Temple of Freedom have all departed, save here and there a solitary exception, even while I speak, at the point of taking wing. The prayer of Lafayette is not yet consummated. Ages upon ages are still to pass away before it can have its full accomplishment; and for its full accomplishment, his spirit, hovering over our heads, in more than echoes talks around these walls. It repeats the prayer which from his lips fifty years ago was at once a parting blessing and a prophecy; for were it possible for the whole human race now breathing the breath of life to be assembled within this Hall, your Orator would, in your name and in that of your constituents, appeal to them to testify for your fathers of the last generation, that, so far as has depended upon them, the blessing of Lafayette has been prophecy! Yes!



this immense Temple of Freedom still stands, a lesson to oppressors, an example to the oppressed, and a sanctuary for the rights of mankind! Yes! with the smiles of a benignant Providence, the splendor and prosperity of these happy United States have illustrated the blessings of their Government, and, we may humbly hope, have rejoiced the departed souls of its founders. For the past your fathers and you have been responsible. The charge of the future devolves upon you and upon your children. The vestal fire of Freedom is in your custody! May the souls of its departed founders never be called to witness its extinction by neglect, nor a soil upon the purity of its keepers!

With this valedictory, Lafayette took, as he and those who heard him then believed, a final leave of the People of the United States. He returned to France, and arrived at Paris on the 25th of January, 1785.

He continued to take a deep interest in the concerns of the United States, and exerted his influence with the French Government to obtain reductions of duties favorable to their commerce and fisheries. In the summer of 1786 he visited several of the German Courts, and attended the last great review by Frederick the Second of his veteran army—a review unusually splendid, and specially remarkable by the attendance of many of the most distinguished military commanders of Europe. In the same year the Legislature of Virginia manifested the continued recollection of his services rendered to the People of that Commonwealth, by a complimentary token of gratitude

not less honorable than it was unusual. They resolved that two busts of Lafayette, to be executed by the celebrated sculptor Houdon, should be procured at their expense; that one of them should be placed in their own Legislative Hall, and the other presented, in their name, to the municipal authorities of the city of Paris. It was accordingly presented by Mr. Jefferson, then Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States in France, and by the permission of Louis the Sixteenth was accepted, and with appropriate solemnity placed in one of the Halls of the Hotel de Ville of the Metropolis of France.

We have gone through one stage of the life of Lafayette: we are now to see him acting upon another theatre—in a cause still essentially the same; but in the application of its principles to his own country.

The immediately originating question which occasioned the French Revolution was the same with that from which the American Revolution had sprung—Taxation of the People without their consent. For nearly two centuries the Kings of France had been accustomed to levy taxes upon the People by Royal Ordinances. But it was necessary that these Ordinances should be registered in the Parliaments or Judicial Tribunals; and these Parliaments claimed the right of remonstrating against them, and sometimes refused the registry of them itself. The members of the Parliaments held their offices by purchase, but were appointed by the King and were subject to banishment or imprisonment at his pleasure. Louis the Fifteenth, towards

the close of his reign had abolished the Parliaments, but they had been restored at the accession of his successor.

The finances of the Kingdom were in extreme disorder. The Minister, or Comptroller General, De Calonne, after attempting various projects for obtaining the supplies, the amount and need of which he was with lavish hand daily increasing, bethought himself at last of calling for the counsel of others. He prevailed upon the King to convoke, not the States General, but an Assembly of *Notables*. There was something ridiculous in the very name by which this meeting was called, but it consisted of a selection from all the *Grandeess* and Dignitaries of the Kingdom. The two brothers of the King, all the Princes of the blood, Archbishops and Bishops, Dukes and Peers, the Chancellor and Presiding Members of the Parliaments, distinguished Members of the Noblesse, and the Mayors and Chief Magistrates of a few of the principal cities of the Kingdom, constituted this Assembly. It was a representation of every interest but that of the People. They were appointed by the King, were members of the highest Aristocracy, and were assembled with the design that their deliberations should be confined exclusively to the subjects submitted to their consideration by the Minister. These were certain plans devised by him for replenishing the insolvent Treasury, by assessments upon the privileged classes, the very Princes, Nobles, Ecclesiastics, and Magistrates exclusively represented in the Assembly itself.

Of this meeting the Marquis de Lafayette was a member. It was held in February, 1787, and terminated in the overthrow and banishment of the Minister by whom it had been convened. In the fiscal concerns which absorbed the care and attention of



others, Lafayette took comparatively little interest. His views were more comprehensive.

The Assembly consisted of one hundred and thirty-seven persons, and divided itself into seven sections or bureaux, each presided by a Prince of the blood. Lafayette was allotted to the division under the Presidency of the Count d'Artois, the younger brother of the King, and since known as Charles the Tenth. The propositions made by Lafayette were—

1. The suppression of Lettres de Cachet, and the abolition of all arbitrary imprisonment.

2. The establishment of religious toleration, and the restoration of the Protestants to their civil rights.

3. The convocation of a National Assembly representing the People of France—Personal Liberty—Religious Liberty—and a Representative Assembly of the People. These were his demands.

The first and second of them produced, perhaps, at the time, no deep impression upon the Assembly, nor upon the public. Arbitrary imprisonment, and the religious persecution of the Protestants had become universally odious. They were worn-out instruments, even in the hands of those who wielded them. There was none to defend them.

But the demand for a National Assembly startled the

Prince at the head of the Bureau. What! said the Count d'Artois, do you ask for the States General? Yes, Sir, was the answer of Lafayette, and for something yet better. You desire then, replied the Prince, that I should take in writing, and report to the King, that the motion to convoke the States General has been made by the Marquis de Lafayette? "Yes, Sir:" and the name of Lafayette was accordingly reported to the King.

The Assembly of Notables was dissolved—De Calonne was displaced and banished, and his successor undertook to raise the needed funds by the authority of Royal Edicts. The war of litigation with the Parliaments recommenced, which terminated only with a positive promise that the States General should be convoked.

From that time a total revolution of Government in France was in progress. It has been a solemn, a sublime, often a most painful, and yet, in the contemplation of great results, a refreshing and cheering contemplation. I cannot follow it in its overwhelming multitude of details, even as connected with the Life and Character of Lafayette. A second Assembly of Notables succeeded the first; and then an Assembly of the States General, first to deliberate in separate orders of Clergy, Nobility, and Third Estate; but, finally, constituting itself a National Assembly, and forming a Constitution of limited Monarchy, with an hereditary Royal Executive, and a Legislature in a single Assembly representing the People.

Lafayette was a member of the States General first as-

sembled. Their meeting was signalized by a struggle between the several orders of which they were composed, which resulted in breaking them all down into one National Assembly.

The convocation of the States General had, in one respect, operated, in the progress of the French Revolution, like the Declaration of Independence in that of North America. It had changed the question in controversy. It was, on the part of the King of France, a concession that he had no lawful power to tax the People without their consent. The States General, therefore, met with this admission already conceded by the King. In the American conflict the British Government never yielded the concession. They undertook to maintain their supposed right of arbitrary taxation by force; and then the People of the Colonies renounced all community of Government, not only with the King and Parliament, but with the British Nation. They reconstructed the fabric of Government for themselves, and held the People of Britain as foreigners—friends in peace—enemies in war.

The concession by Louis the Sixteenth, implied in the convocation of the States General, was a virtual surrender of absolute power—an acknowledgment that, as exercised by himself and his predecessors, it had been usurped. It was in substance an abdication of his Crown. There was no power which he exercised as King of France, the lawfulness of which was not contestable on the same principle which denied him the right of taxation. When the Assembly of the States General met at Versailles, in May, 1789, there was but a



shadow of the Royal authority left. They felt that the power of the Nation was in their hands, and they were not sparing in the use of it. The Representatives of the Third Estate, double in numbers to those of the Clergy and the Nobility, constituted themselves a National Assembly, and as a signal for the demolition of all privileged orders, refused to deliberate in separate Chambers, and thus compelled the Representatives of the Clergy and Nobility to merge their separate existence in the general mass of the popular Representation.

Thus the edifice of society was to be reconstructed in France as it had been in America. The King made a feeble attempt to overawe the Assembly, by calling regiments of troops to Versailles, and surrounding with them the hall of their meeting. But there was defection in the army itself, and even the person of the King soon ceased to be at his own disposal. On the 11th of July, 1789, in the midst of the fermentation which had succeeded the fall of the Monarchy, and while the Assembly was surrounded by armed soldiers, Lafayette presented to them his Declaration of Rights—the first declaration of *human* rights ever proclaimed in Europe. It was adopted, and became the basis of that which the Assembly promulgated with their Constitution.

It was in this hemisphere, and in our own country, that all its principles had been imbibed. At the very moment when the Declaration was presented, the convulsive struggle between the expiring Monarchy and the new-born but portentous anarchy of the Parisian populace was taking place. The Royal Palace and the Hall of the Assembly was surrounded with troops, and insurrection

was kindling at Paris. In the midst of the popular commotion, a deputation of sixty members, with Lafayette at their head, was sent from the Assembly to tranquilize the People of Paris, and that incident was the occasion of the institution of the National Guard throughout the Realm, and of the appointment, with the approbation of the King, of Lafayette as their General Commander-in-chief.

This event, without vacating his seat in the National Assembly, connected him at once with the military and the popular movement of the Revolution. The National Guard was the armed militia of the whole Kingdom, embodied for the preservation of order, and the protection of persons and property, as well as for the establishment of the liberties of the People. In his double capacity of Commander General of this force, and of a Representative in the Constituent Assembly, his career, for a period of more than three years, was beset with the most imminent dangers, and with difficulties beyond all human power to surmount.

The ancient Monarchy of France had crumbled into ruins. A National Assembly, formed by an irregular Representation of Clergy, Nobles, and Third Estate, after melting at the fire of a revolution into one body, had transformed itself into a Constituent Assembly representing the People, had assumed the exercise of all the powers of Government, extorted from the hands of the King, and undertaken to form a Constitution for the French Nation, founded at once upon the theory of human rights, and upon the preservation of a royal hereditary Crown upon the head of Louis the Sixteenth. Lafayette sincerely believed that such a system would not be absolutely incompatible with the nature of

things. An hereditary Monarchy, surrounded by popular institutions, presented itself to his imagination as a practicable form of government; nor is it certain that even to his last days he ever abandoned this persuasion. The element of hereditary Monarchy in this Constitution was indeed not congenial with it. The prototype from which the whole fabric had been drawn, had no such element in its composition. A feeling of generosity, of compassion, of commiseration with the unfortunate Prince then upon the throne, who had been his Sovereign, and for his ill-fated family, mingled itself, perhaps unconsciously to himself, with his well-reasoned faith in the abstract principles of a republican creed. The total abolition of the monarchical feature undoubtedly belonged to his theory, but the family of Bourbon had still a strong hold on the affections of the French People; History had not made up a record favorable to the establishment of elective Kings—a strong Executive Head was absolutely necessary to curb the impetuosities of the People of France; and the same doctrine which played upon the fancy, and crept upon the kind-hearted benevolence of Lafayette, was adopted by a large majority of the National Assembly, sanctioned by the suffrages of its most intelligent, virtuous, and patriotic members, and was finally embodied in that royal democracy, the result of their labors, sent forth to the world, under the guarantee of numberless oaths, as the Constitution of France for all aftertime.

But during the same period after the first meeting of the States General, and while they were in actual conflict with the expiring energies of the Crown, and with the exclusive privileges of the Clergy and Nobility, another portentous power had arisen, and entered with terrific activity into the contro-



versies of the time. This was the power of popular insurrection, organized by voluntary associations of clubs, and impelled to action by the municipal authorities of the City of Paris.

The first movements of the People in the state of insurrection took place on the 12th of July, 1789, and issued in the destruction of the Bastile, and in the murder of its Governor, and of several other persons, hung up at lamp-posts, or torn to pieces by the frenzied multitude, without form of trial and without shadow of guilt.

The Bastile had long been odious as the place of confinement of persons arrested by arbitrary orders for offences against the Government, and its destruction was hailed by most of the friends of Liberty throughout the world as an act of patriotism and magnanimity on the part of the People. The brutal ferocity of the murders was overlooked or palliated in the glory of the achievement of razing to its foundations the execrated Citadel of Despotism. But, as the summary justice of insurrection can manifest itself only by destruction, the example once set became a precedent for a series of years for scenes so atrocious, and for butcheries so merciless and horrible, that memory revolts at the task of recalling them to the mind.

It would be impossible, within the compass of this Discourse, to follow the details of the French Revolution to the final dethronement of Louis the Sixteenth, and the extinction of the Constitutional Monarchy of France, on the 10th of August, 1792.

During that period the two distinct Powers were in continual operation—sometimes in concert with each other, sometimes at irreconcilable opposition. Of these Powers, one was the People of France, represented by the Parisian populace in insurrection; the other was the People of France, represented successively by the Constituent Assembly which formed the Constitution of 1791, and by the Legislative Assembly elected to carry it into execution.

The movements of the insurgent Power were occasionally convulsive and cruel, without mitigation or mercy. Guided by secret springs, prompted by vindictive and sanguinary ambition, directed by hands unseen to objects of individual aggrandizement, its agency fell like the thunderbolt, and swept like the whirlwind.

The proceedings of the Assemblies were deliberative and intellectual. They began by grasping at the whole power of the Monarchy, and they finished by sinking under the dictation of the Parisian populace. The Constituent Assembly numbered among its members many individuals of great ability and of pure principles, but they were overawed and domineered by that other Representation of the People of France, which, through the instrumentality of the Jacobin Club and the Municipality of Paris, disconcerted the wisdom of the wise, and scattered to the winds the counsels of the prudent. It was impossible that under the perturbations of such a controlling power, a Constitution suited to the character and circumstances of the Nation should be formed.

Through the whole of this period the part performed by Lafayette was without parallel in history. The annals of the human race exhibit no other instance of a position comparable for its unintermitted perils, its deep responsibilities, and its providential issues, with that which he occupied as Commander General of the National Guard, and as a leading member of the Constituent Assembly. In the numerous insurrections of the People he saved the lives of multitudes devoted as victims, and always at the most imminent hazard of his own. On the 5th and 6th of October, 1789, he saved the lives of Louis the Sixteenth and of his Queen. He escaped time after time the daggers sharpened by princely conspiracy on one hand, and by popular frenzy on the other. He witnessed too, without being able to prevent it, the butchery of Foulon before his eyes; and the reeking heart of Berthier, torn from his lifeless trunk, was held up in exulting triumph before him. On this occasion and on another he threw up his commission as Commander of the National Guards; but who could have succeeded him even with equal power to restrain these volcanic excesses? At the earnest solicitation of those who well knew that his place could never be supplied, he resumed and continued in the command until the solemn proclamation of the Constitution, upon which he definitively laid it down and retired to private life upon his estate in Auvergne.

As a member of the Constituent Assembly, it is not in the detailed organization of the Government which they prepared, that *his* spirit and co-operation is to be traced. It is in the *principles* which he proposed and infused into the system. As



at the first Assembly of Notables his voice had been raised for the abolition of arbitrary imprisonment, for the extinction of religious intolerance, and for the representation of the People, so in the National Assembly besides the Declaration of Rights which formed the basis of the Constitution itself, he made or supported the motions for the establishment of trial by jury, for the gradual emancipation of slaves, for the freedom of the Press, for the abolition of all titles of nobility, and for the declaration of equality of all the citizens, and the suppression of all the privileged orders, without exception of the Princes of the royal family. Thus, while as a legislator he was spreading the principles of universal liberty over the whole surface of the State, as Commander-in-chief of the armed force of the Nation, he was controlling, repressing, and mitigating, as far as it could be effected by human power, the excesses of the People.

The Constitution was at length proclaimed, and the Constituent National Assembly was dissolved. In advance of this event, the sublime spectacle of the Federation was exhibited on the 14th of July, 1790, the first anniversary of the destruction of the Bastile. There was an ingenious and fanciful association of ideas in the selection of that day. The Bastile was a State Prison, a massive structure, which had stood four hundred years, every stone of which was saturated with sighs and tears, and echoed the groans of four centuries of oppression. It was the very type and emblem of the despotism which had so long weighed upon France. Demolished from its summit to its foundation at the first shout of Freedom from the People, what day could be more appropriate than its anniversary for

the day of solemn consecration of the new fabric of Government, founded upon the rights of man?

I shall not describe the magnificent and melancholy pageant of that day. It has been done by abler hands, and in a style which could only be weakened and diluted by repetition.\* The religious solemnity of the mass was performed by a Prelate, then eminent among the members of the Assembly and the dignitaries of the land; still eminent, after surviving the whole circle of subsequent revolutions. No longer a father of the Church but among the most distinguished laymen and most celebrated statesmen of France, *his* was the voice to invoke the blessing of Heaven upon this new Constitution for his liberated *country*; and he and Louis the Sixteenth, and Lafayette, and thirty thousand delegates from all the Confederated National Guards of the Kingdom, in the presence of Almighty God and of five hundred thousand of their countrymen, took the oath of fidelity to the Nation, to the Constitution, and all, save the Monarch himself, to the King. His corresponding oath was, of fidelity to discharge the duties of his high office, and to the People.

Alas! and was it all false and hollow! had these oaths no more substance than the breath that ushered them to the winds! It is impossible to look back upon the short and turbulent existence of this royal democracy, to mark the frequent paroxysms of popular frenzy by which it was assailed and the catastrophe by which it perished, and to believe that the vows of all who swore to support it were sincere. But, as well might the

\* In the Address to the young men of Boston, by Edward Everett.

sculptor of a block of marble, after exhausting his genius and his art in giving it a beautiful human form, call God to witness that it shall perform all the functions of animal life, as the Constituent Assembly of France could pledge the faith of its members that their royal democracy should work as a permanent organized form of government. The Declaration of Rights contained all the principles essential to freedom. The frame of government was radically and irreparably defective. The hereditary Royal Executive was itself an inconsistency with the Declaration of Rights. The Legislative power, all concentrated in a single Assembly, was an incongruity still more glaring. These were both departures from the system of organization which Lafayette had witnessed in the American Constitutions: neither of them was approved by Lafayette. In deference to the prevailing opinions and prejudices of the times he acquiesced in them, and he was destined to incur the most imminent hazards of his life, and to make the sacrifice of all that gives value to life itself, in faithful adherence to that Constitution which he had sworn to support.

Shortly after his resignation as Commander General of the National Guards, the friends of liberty and order presented him as a candidate for election as Mayor of Paris; but he had a competitor in the person of Pethion more suited to the party, pursuing with inexorable rancor the abolition of the Monarchy and the destruction of the King; and, what may seem scarcely credible, the remnant of the party which still adhered to the King, the King himself, and above all the Queen, favored the election of the Jacobin Pethion in prefer-



ence to that of Lafayette. They were, too fatally for themselves, successful.

From the first meeting of the Legislative Assembly under the Constitution of 1791, the destruction of the King and of the Monarchy, and the establishment of a Republic by means of the popular passions and of popular violence, were the deliberate purposes of its leading members. The spirit with which the Revolution had been pursued from the time of the destruction of the Bastille, had caused the emigration of great numbers of the Nobility and Clergy; and among them the two brothers of Louis the Sixteenth, and of several other Princes of his blood. They had applied to all the other great Monarchies of Europe for assistance to uphold or restore the crumbling Monarchy of France. The French Reformers themselves, in the heat of their political fanaticism, avowed, without disguise, the design to revolutionize all Europe, and had emissaries in every country openly or secretly preaching the doctrine of insurrection against all established Governments. Louis the Sixteenth and his Queen, an Austrian Princess, sister to the Emperor Leopold, were in secret negotiation with the Austrian Government for the rescue of the King and royal family of France from the dangers with which they were so incessantly beset. In the Electorate of Treves, a part of the Germanic Empire, the emigrants from France were assembling with indications of a design to enter France in hostile array to effect a counter-revolution; and the brothers of the King, assuming a position at Coblenz, on the borders of their country, were holding councils, the object of which was to march in arms

to Paris to release the King from captivity, and to restore the ancient Monarchy to the dominion of absolute Power.

The King, who even before his forced acceptance of the Constitution of 1791 had made an unsuccessful attempt to escape from his palace prison, was, in April, 1792. reduced to the humiliating necessity of declaring war against the very Sovereigns who were arming their Nations to rescue him from his revolted subjects. Three armies, each of fifty thousand men, were levied to meet the emergencies of this war, and were placed under the command of Luckner, Rochambeau, and Lafayette. As he passed through Paris to go and take the command of his army, he appeared before the Legislative Assembly, the President of which, in addressing him, said that the Nation would oppose to their enemies the Constitution and Lafayette.

But the enemies to the Constitution were within the walls. At this distance of time, when most of the men and many of the passions of those days have passed away, when the French Revolution and its results should be regarded with the searching eye of philosophical speculation as lessons of experience to after ages, may it even now be permitted to remark how much the virtues and the crimes of men, in times of political convulsion, are modified and characterized by the circumstances in which they are placed. The great actors of the tremendous scenes of revolution of those times were men educated in schools of high civilization, and in the humane and benevolent precepts of the Christian religion. A small

portion of them were vicious and depraved; but the great majority were wound up to madness by that war of conflicting interests and absorbing passions, enkindled by a great convulsion of the social system. It has been said by a great master of human nature—

“In peace, there’s nothing so becomes a man  
As modest stillness and humility;  
But when the blast of war blows in your ears,  
Then imitate the action of the tiger.”

Too faithfully did the People of France, and the leaders of their factions, in that war of all the political elements, obey that injunction. Who that lived in that day can remember! who since born can read, or bear to be told the horrors of the 20th of June, the 10th of August, the 2d and 3d of September, 1792, of the 31st of May, 1793, and of a multitude of others, during which in dreadful succession the murderers of one day were the victims of the next, until that, when the insurgent populace themselves were shot down by thousands in the very streets of Paris by the military legions of the Convention, and the rising fortune and genius of Napoleon Bonaparte! Who can remember, or read, or hear of all this, without shuddering at the sight of man, his fellow-creature, in the drunkenness of political frenzy degrading himself beneath the condition of the cannibal savage—beneath even the condition of the wild beasts of the desert! and who but with a feeling of deep mortification can reflect, that the rational and immortal being to the race of which he himself belongs, should, even in his most palmy state of intellectual cultivation, be capable of this self-transformation to brutality!



In this dissolution of all the moral elements which regulate the conduct of men in their social condition—in this monstrous and scarcely conceivable spectacle of a King at the head of a mighty Nation in secret league with the enemies against whom he has proclaimed himself at war, and of a Legislature conspiring to destroy the King and Constitution to which they have sworn allegiance and support, Lafayette alone is seen to preserve his fidelity to the King, to the Constitution, and to his country:

“Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,  
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal.”

On the 16th of June, 1792, four days before the first violation of the Palace of the Tuilleries by the populace of Paris, at the instigation of the Jacobins, Lafayette in a letter to the Legislative Assembly had denounced the Jacobin Club, and called upon the Assembly to suppress them. He afterwards repaired to Paris in person, presented himself at the bar of the Assembly, repeated his denunciation of the Club, and took measures for suppressing their meetings by force. He proposed also to the King himself to furnish him with means of withdrawing with his family to Compeigne, where he would have been out of the reach of that ferocious and blood-thirsty multitude. The Assembly by a great majority of votes sustained the principles of his letter, but the King declined his proffered assistance to enable him to withdraw from Paris; and of those upon whom he called to march with him and shut up the hall where the Jacobins held their meetings, not more than thirteen persons presented themselves at the appointed time.

He returned to his army, and became thenceforth the special object of Jacobin resentment and revenge. On the 8th of August, on a preliminary measure to the intended insurrection of the 10th, the question was taken, after several days of debate, upon a formal motion that he should be put in accusation and tried. The last remnant of freedom in that Assembly was then seen by the vote upon nominal appeal, or yeas and nays, in which four hundred and forty-six votes were for rejecting the charge, and only two hundred and twenty-four for sustaining it. Two days after, the Tuilleries were stormed by popular insurrection. The unfortunate King was compelled to seek refuge, with his family, in the Hall of the Legislative Assembly, and escaped from being torn to pieces by an infuriated multitude, only to pass from his palace to the prison, in his way to the scaffold.

This revolution, thus accomplished, annihilated the Constitution, the Government, and the cause for which Lafayette had contended. The people of France by their acquiescence, a great portion of them by direct approval, confirmed and sanctioned the abolition of the Monarchy. The armies and their commanders took the same victorious side: not a show of resistance was made to the revolutionary torrent, not an arm was lifted to restore the fallen Monarch to his throne, nor even to rescue or protect his person from the fury of his inexorable foes. Lafayette himself would have marched to Paris with his army for the defence of the Constitution, but in this disposition he was not seconded by his troops. After ascertaining that the effort would be vain, and after arresting at Sedan the members

of the Deputation from the Legislative Assembly, sent after their own subjugation to arrest him, he determined, as the only expedient left him to save his honor and his principles, to withdraw both from the army and the country ; to pass into a neutral territory, and thence into these United States, the country of his early adoption and his fond partiality, where he was sure of finding a safe asylum, and of meeting a cordial welcome.

But his destiny had reserved him for other and severer trials. We have seen him struggling for the support of principles, against the violence of raging factions and the fickleness of the multitude ; we are now to behold him in the hands of the hereditary rulers of mankind, and to witness the nature of their tender mercies to him.

It was in the neutral territory of Liege that he, together with his companions, Latour Maubourg, Bureau de Puzy, and Alexandre Lameth, was taken by Austrians, and transferred to Prussian guards. Under the circumstances of the case, he could not by the principles of the laws of Nations be treated even as a prisoner of war. He was treated as a prisoner of State. Prisoners of State in the Monarchies of Europe are always presumed guilty, and are treated as if entitled as little to mercy as to justice. Lafayette was immured in dungeons, first at Wesel, then at Magdeburg, and finally at Olmutz, in Moravia. By what right ? By none known among men. By what authority ? *That* has never been avowed. For what cause ? None has ever been assigned. Taken by Austrian soldiers upon a neutral territory, he was handed over to Prussian jailers ; and,



when Frederick William of Prussia abandoned his Austrian ally, and made his separate peace with republican France, he retransferred his illustrious prisoner to the Austrians, from whom he had received him, that he might be deprived of the blessing of regaining his liberty even from the hands of Peace. Five years was the duration of this imprisonment, aggravated by every indignity that could make oppression bitter. That it was intended as imprisonment for life, was not only freely avowed but significantly made known to him by his jailors; and while with affected precaution the means of terminating his sufferings by his own act were removed from him, the barbarity of ill usage, of unwholesome food, and of a pestiferous atmosphere, was applied with inexorable rigor, as if to abridge the days which at the same time were rendered as far as possible insupportable to himself.

Neither the generous sympathies of the gallant soldier, General Fitzpatrick, in the British House of Commons, nor the personal solicitation of Washington, President of the United States, speaking with the voice of a grateful Nation, nor the persuasive accents of domestic and conjugal affection, imploring the Monarch of Austria for the release of Lafayette, could avail. The unsophisticated feeling of generous nature in the hearts of men at this outrage upon justice and humanity, was manifested in another form. Two individuals, private citizens, one of the United States of America, Francis Huger, the other a native of the Electorate of Hanover, Doctor Erick Bollmann, undertook at the imminent hazard of their lives to supply means for his escape from prison, and their personal aid to its

accomplishment. Their design was formed with great address, pursued with untiring perseverance, and executed with undaunted intrepidity. It was frustrated by accidents beyond the control of human sagacity.

To his persecutions, however, the hand of a wise and just Providence had, in its own time and in its own way, prepared a termination. The hands of the Emperor Francis, tied by mysterious and invisible bands against the indulgence of mercy to the tears of a more than heroic wife, were loosened by the more prevailing eloquence, or, rather, were severed by the conquering sword of Napoleon Bonaparte, acting under instructions from the Executive Directory then swaying the destinies of France.

Lafayette and his fellow-sufferers were still under the sentence of proscription, issued by the faction which had destroyed the Constitution of 1791 and murdered the ill-fated Louis and his Queen. But revolution had followed upon revolution since the downfall of the Monarchy, on the 10th of August, 1792. The Federative Republicans of the Gironde had been butchered by the Jacobin Republicans of the Mountain. The Mountain had been subjugated by the Municipality of Paris, and the sections of Paris by a reorganization of parties in the National Convention, and with aid from the armies. Brissot and his federal associates, Danton and his party, Robespierre and his subaltern demons, had successively perished, each by the measure applied to themselves which they had meted out to others; and as no experiment of political empiricism was to be omitted in the

medley of the French Revolutions, the hereditary Executive, with a single Legislative Assembly, was succeeded by a Constitution with a Legislature in two branches, and a five-headed Executive, eligible, annually one-fifth, by their concurrent votes, and bearing the name of a Directory. This was the Government at whose instance Lafayette was finally liberated from the dungeon of Olmutz.

But while this Directory were shaking to their deepest foundations all the Monarchies of Europe; while they were stripping Austria, the most potent of them all, piece-meal of her territories; while they were imposing upon her the most humiliating conditions of peace, and bursting open her dungeons to restore their illustrious countrymen to the light of day and the blessing of personal freedom, they were themselves exploding by internal combustion, divided into two factions, each conspiring the destruction of the other. Lafayette received his freedom, only to see the two members of the Directory who had taken the warmest interest in effecting his liberation, outlawed and proscribed by their colleagues: one of them, Carnot, a fugitive from his country, lurking in banishment to escape pursuit; and the other, Barthelemy, deported, with fifty members of the Legislative Assembly, without form of trial, or even of legal process, to the pestilential climate of Guiana. All this was done with the approbation, expressed in the most unqualified terms, of Napoleon, and with co-operation of his army. Upon being informed of the success of this Pride's purge, he wrote to the Directory that he had with him one hundred thousand men, upon whom they might rely to cause to be respected all



the measures that they should take to establish liberty upon solid foundations.

Two years afterwards, another revolution, directly accomplished by Napoleon himself, demolished the Directory, the Constitution of the two Councils, and the solid liberty, to the support of which the hundred thousand men had been pledged, had introduced another Constitution, with Bonaparte himself for its Executive Head, as the first of three Consuls, for five years.

In the interval between these two revolutions, Lafayette resided for about two years, first in the Danish Territory of Holstein, and afterwards at Utrecht, in the Batavian Republic. Neither of them had been effected by means or in a manner which could possibly meet his approbation. But the Consular Government commenced with broad professions of republican principles, on the faith of which he returned to France, and for a series of years resided in privacy and retirement upon his estate of La Grange. Here, in the cultivation of his farm and the enjoyment of domestic felicity, embittered only by the loss, in 1807, of that angel upon earth, the partner of all the vicissitudes of his life, he employed his time, and witnessed the upward flight and downward fall of the soldier and sport of fortune, Napoleon Bonaparte. He had soon perceived the hollowness of the Consular professions of pure republican principles, and withheld himself from all participation in the Government. In 1802, he was elected a member of the General Council of the Department of Upper Loire, and, in declining the appointment, took occasion to

present a review of his preceding life, and a pledge of his perseverance in the principles which he had previously sustained. "Far," said he, "from the scene of public affairs, and devoting myself at last to the repose of private life, my ardent wishes are, that external peace should soon prove the fruit of those miracles of glory which are even now surpassing the prodigies of the preceding campaigns, and that internal peace should be consolidated upon the essential and invariable foundations of true liberty. Happy that twenty-three years of vicissitudes in my fortune, and of constancy to my principles, authorize me to repeat, that, if a Nation to recover its rights needs only the will, they can only be preserved by inflexible fidelity to its obligations."

When the First Consulate for five years was invented as one of the steps of the ladder of Napoleon's ambition, he suffered Sieyes, the member of the Directory, whom he had used as an instrument for casting off that worse than worthless institution, to prepare another Constitution, of which he took as much as suited his purpose, and consigned the rest to oblivion. One of the wheels of this new political engine was a conservative Senate, forming the peerage to sustain the Executive Head. This body it was the interest and the policy of Napoleon to conciliate, and he filled it with men who, through all the previous stages of the Revolution, had acquired and maintained the highest respectability of character. Lafayette was urged with great earnestness by Napoleon himself to take a seat in this Senate; but after several conferences with the First Consul in which he ascertained the extent of his designs, he peremptorily declined. His answer

to the Minister of War tempered his refusal with a generous and delicate compliment, alluding at the same time to the position which the consistency of his character made it his duty to occupy. To the First Consul himself, in terms equally candid and explicit, he said, "that, from the direction which public affairs were taking, what he already saw, and what it was easy to foresee, it did not seem suitable to his character to enter into an order of things contrary to his principles, and in which he would have to contend without success, as without public utility, against a man to whom he was indebted for great obligations."

Not long afterwards, when all republican principle was so utterly prostrated that he was summoned to vote on the question whether the *citizen* Napoleon Bonaparte should be Consul for life, Lafayette added to his vote the following comment: "I cannot vote for such a Magistracy until the public liberty shall have been sufficiently guaranteed; and in that event I vote for Napoleon Bonaparte."

He wrote at the same time to the First Consul a letter explanatory of his vote, which no Republican will now read without recognizing the image of inordinate and triumphant ambition cowering under the rebuke of disinterested virtue.

"The 18th of Brumaire (said this letter) saved France; and I felt myself recalled by the liberal professions to which you had attached your honor. Since then we have seen in the Consular power that reparatory dictatorship which, under the



auspices of your genius, has achieved so much; *yet not so much as will be the restoration of liberty.* It is impossible that you, General, the first of that order of men who to compare and seat themselves take in the compass of all ages, that *you* should wish such a revolution—so many victories, so much blood, so many calamities and prodigies, should have for the world and for you no other result than an arbitrary Government. The French People have too well known their rights ultimately to forget them; but perhaps they are now better prepared, than in the time of their effervescence, to recover them usefully; and you, by the force of your character and of the public confidence, by the superiority of your talents, of your position, of your fortune, may, by the re-establishment of liberty, surmount every danger and relieve every anxiety. I have then no other than patriotic and personal motives for wishing you this last addition to your glory—a permanent magistracy; but it is due to the principles, the engagements, and the actions of my whole life, to wait, before giving my vote, until liberty shall have been settled upon foundations worthy of the Nation and of you. I hope, General, that you will here find, as heretofore, that with the perseverance of my political opinions are united sincere good wishes personally to you, and a profound sentiment of my obligations to you.”

The writer of this letter, and he to whom it was addressed, have each in his appropriate sphere been instruments of transcendent power, in the hands of Providence, to shape the ends of its wisdom in the wonderful story of the French Revolution. In contemplating the part which each of them had acted upon that great theatre of human destiny, *before* the date of the letter,

how strange was at that moment the relative position of the two individuals to each other and to the world ! Lafayette was the founder of the great movement then in progress for the establishment of freedom in France, and in the European world ; but his agency had been all intellectual and moral. He had asserted and proclaimed the principles. He had never violated, never betrayed them. Napoleon, a military adventurer, had vaped in proclamations, and had the froth of Jacobinism upon his lips ; but his soul was at the point of his sword. The Revolution was to Lafayette the cause of human kind ; to Napoleon it was a mere ladder of ambition.

Yet, at the time when this letter was written, Lafayette after a series of immense sacrifices and unparalleled sufferings, was a private citizen, called to account to the world for declining to vote for placing Napoleon at the head of the French Nation, with arbitrary and indefinite power for life ; and Napoleon, amid professions of unbounded devotion to *liberty*, was, in the face of mankind, ascending the steps of an hereditary imperial and royal throne. Such was their relative position *then* ; what is it now ? Has History a lesson for mankind more instructive than the contrast and the parallel of their fortunes and their fate ? Time and chance, and the finger of Providence, which in every deviation from the path of justice reserves or opens to itself an avenue of return, has brought each of these mighty men to a close of life, congenial to the character with which he travelled over its scenes. The Consul for life, the hereditary Emperor and King, expires a captive on a barren rock in the wilderness of a distant Ocean—separated from his imperial wife—separated from

his son, who survives him only to pine away his existence, and die at the moment of manhood in the condition of an Austrian Prince. The Apostle of Liberty survives, again to come forward the ever-consistent champion of her cause, and finally to close his career in peace, a Republican, without reproach in death as he had been without fear throughout life.

But Napoleon was to be the artificer of his own fortunes, prosperous and adverse. He was rising by the sword; by the sword he was destined to fall. The counsels of wisdom and of virtue fell forceless upon his ear, or sunk into his heart only to kindle resentment and hatred. He sought no further personal intercourse with Lafayette; and denied common justice to his son, who had entered and distinguished himself in the army of Italy, and from whom he withheld the promotion justly due to his services.

The career of glory, of fame, and of power, of which the Consulate for life was but the first step, was of ten years' continuance, till it had reached its zenith; till the astonished eyes of mankind beheld the charity scholar of Brienne, Emperor, King, and Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine, banqueting at Dresden, surrounded by a circle of tributary crowned heads, among whom was seen that very Francis of Austria, the keeper, in his Castle of Olmutz, of the republican Lafayette. And upon that day of the banqueting at Dresden, the star of Napoleon culminated from the Equator. Thenceforward it was to descend with motion far more rapid than when rising, till it sank in endless night. Through that long period Lafayette



remained in retirement at La Grange. Silent amidst the deafening shouts of victory from Marengo, and Jena, and Austerlitz, and Friedland, and Wagram, and Borodino—silent at the conflagration of Moscow; at the passage of the Beresina; at the irretrievable discomfiture of Leipzig; at the capitulation at the gates of Paris, and at the first restoration of the Bourbons under the auspices of the inveterate enemies of France—as little could Lafayette participate in the measures of that restoration as in the usurpations of Napoleon. Louis the Eighteenth was *quartered* upon the French Nation as the soldiers of the victorious armies were quartered upon the inhabitants of Paris. Yet Louis the Eighteenth, who held his Crown as the gift of the conquerors of France, the most humiliating of the conditions imposed upon the vanquished Nation, affected to hold it by Divine right, and to grant, as a special favor, a *Charter*, or Constitution, founded on the avowed principle that all the liberties of the Nation were no more than gratuitous donations of the King.

These pretensions, with a corresponding course of policy pursued by the reinstated Government of the Bourbons, and the disregard of the national feelings and interests of France, with which Europe was remodelled at the Congress of Vienna, opened the way for the return of Napoleon from Elba, within a year from the time when he had been relegated there. He landed as a solitary adventurer, and the Nation rallied round him with rapture. He came with promises to the Nation of freedom, as well as of independence. The Allies of Vienna proclaimed against him a war of extermination, and reinvaded

France with armies exceeding in numbers a million of men. Lafayette had been courted by Napoleon upon his return. He was again urged to take a seat in the House of Peers, but peremptorily declined, from aversion to its hereditary character. He had refused to resume his title of nobility, and protested against the Constitution of the Empire, and the additional act entailing the imperial hereditary Crown upon the family of Napoleon. But he offered himself as a candidate for election as a member of the popular Representative Chamber of the Legislature, and was unanimously chosen by the Electoral College of his Department to that station.

The battle of Waterloo was the last desperate struggle of Napoleon to recover his fallen fortunes, and its issue fixed his destiny forever. He escaped almost alone from the field, and returned a fugitive to Paris, projecting to dissolve by armed force the Legislative Assembly, and, assuming a dictatorial power, to levy a new army and try the desperate chances of another battle. This purpose was defeated by the energy and promptitude of Lafayette. At his instance the Assembly adopted three resolutions, one of which declared them in permanent session, and denounced any attempt to dissolve them as a crime of high treason.

After a feeble and fruitless attempt of Napoleon, through his brother Lucien, to obtain from the Assembly itself a temporary dictatorial power, he abdicated the Imperial Crown in favor of his infant son; but his abdication could not relieve France from the deplorable condition to which he had reduced

her. France, from the day of the battle of Waterloo, was at the mercy of the allied Monarchs; and, as the last act of their revenge, they gave her again the Bourbons. France was constrained to receive them. It was at the point of the bayonet, and resistance was of no avail. The Legislative Assembly appointed a Provisional Council of Government, and Commissioners, of whom Lafayette was one, to negotiate with the allied armies then rapidly advancing upon Paris.

The Allies manifested no disposition to negotiate. They closed the doors of their Hall upon the Representatives of the People of France. They reseatd Louis the Eighteenth upon his throne. Against these measures Lafayette and the members of the Assembly had no means of resistance left, save a fearless protest, to be remembered when the day of freedom should return.

From the time of this second restoration until his death, Lafayette, who had declined accepting a seat in the hereditary Chamber of Peers, and inflexibly refused to resume his title of nobility, though the Charter of Louis the Eighteenth had restored them all, was almost constantly a member of the Chamber of Deputies, the popular branch of the Legislature. More than once, however, the influence of the court was successful in defeating his election. At one of these intervals he employed the leisure afforded him in revisiting the United States.

Forty years had elapsed since he had visited and taken leave of them, at the close of the Revolutionary War. The



greater part of the generation for and with whom he had fought his first fields, had passed away. Of the two millions of souls to whose rescue from oppression he had crossed the Ocean in 1777, not one in ten survived. But their places were supplied by more than five times their numbers—their descendants and successors. The sentiment of gratitude and affection for Lafayette, far from declining with the lapse of time, quickened in spirit as it advanced in years, and seemed to multiply with the increasing numbers of the People. The Nation had never ceased to sympathize with his fortunes, and in every vicissitude of his life had manifested the deepest interest in his welfare. He had occasionally expressed his intention to visit once more the scene of his early achievements, and the country which had requited his services by a just estimate of their value. In February, 1824, a solemn Legislative act, unanimously passed by both Houses of Congress, and approved by the President of the United States, charged the Chief Magistrate of the Nation with the duty of communicating to him the assurances of grateful and affectionate attachment still cherished for him by the Government and People of the United States, and of tendering to him a national ship, with suitable accommodation, for his conveyance to this country.

Ten years have passed away since the occurrence of that event. Since then, the increase of population within the borders of our Union exceeds, in numbers, the whole mass of that infant community to whose liberties he had devoted, in early youth, his life and fortune. His companions and fellow-

soldiers of the war of Independence, of whom a scanty remnant still existed, to join in the universal shout of welcome with which he landed upon our shores, have been since, in the ordinary course of nature, dropping away: pass but a few short years more, and not an individual of that generation with which he toiled and bled in the cause of human kind upon his first appearance on the field of human action, will be left. The gallant officer and distinguished Representative of the People, at whose motion upon this floor the invitation of the Nation was given—the Chief Magistrate by whom in compliance with the will of the Legislature it was tendered—the surviving Presidents of the United States, and their venerable compeer signers of the Declaration of Independence, who received him to the arms of private friendship while mingling their voices in the chorus of public exultation and joy, are no longer here to shed the tear of sorrow upon his departure from this earthly scene. They all preceded him in the translation to another, and, we trust, a happier world. The active energetic manhood of the Nation, of whose infancy he had been the protector and benefactor, and who by the protracted festivities of more than a year of jubilee manifested to him their sense of the obligations for which they were indebted to him, are already descending into the vale of years. The children of the public schools, who thronged in double files to pass in review before him to catch a glimpse of his countenance and a smile from his eye, are now among the men and women of the land, rearing another generation to envy their parents the joy which they can never share, of having seen and contributed to the glorious and triumphant reception of Lafayette.

Upon his return to France Lafayette was received with a welcome by his countrymen scarcely less enthusiastic than that with which he had been greeted in this country. From his landing at Havre till his arrival at his residence at La Grange it was again one triumphal march, rendered but the more striking by the interruptions and obstacles of an envious and jealous Government. Threats were not even spared of arresting him as a criminal, and holding him responsible for the spontaneous and irrepressible feelings manifested by the People in his favor. He was very soon after his return again elected a member of the Chamber of Deputies, and thenceforward, in that honorable and independent station, was the soul of that steadfast and inflexible party which never ceased to defend, and was ultimately destined to vindicate the liberties of France.

The Government of the Bourbons, from the time of their restoration, was a perpetual struggle to return to the Saturnian times of absolute power. For *them* the Sun and Moon had stood still, not, as in the miracle of ancient story for about a whole day, but for more than a whole century. Reseated upon their throne, not as the Stuarts had been in the seventeenth century by the voluntary act of the same People which had expelled them, but by the arms of foreign Kings and hostile armies, instead of aiming by the liberality of their Government and by improving the condition of their People to make them forget the humiliation of the yoke imposed upon them, they labored with unyielding tenacity to make it more galling. They disarmed the National Guards; they cramped and crippled the right of suffrage in elections;



they perverted and travestied the institution of juries; they fettered the freedom of the Press, and in their external policy lent themselves willing instruments to crush the liberties of Spain and Italy. The spirit of the Nation was curbed, but not subdued. The principles of freedom proclaimed in the Declaration of Rights of 1789 had taken too deep root to be extirpated. Charles the Tenth, by a gradual introduction into his councils of the most inveterate adherents to the anti-revolutionary Government, was preparing the way for the annihilation of the Charter and of the Legislative Representation of the People. In proportion as this plan approached to its maturity the resistance of the Nation to its accomplishment acquired consistency and organization. The time had been, when, by the restrictions upon the right of suffrage and the control of the Press, and even of the freedom of debate in the Legislature, the Opposition in the Chamber of Deputies had dwindled down to not more than thirty members. But under a rapid succession of incompetent and unpopular Administrations, the majority of the House of Deputies had passed from the side of the Court to that of the People. In August, 1829, the King, confiding in his imaginary strength, reorganized his Ministry by the appointment of men whose reputation was itself a pledge of the violent and desperate designs in contemplation. At the first meeting of the Legislative Assembly, an address to the King, signed by two hundred and twenty-one out of four hundred members, declared to him, in respectful terms, that a concurrence of sentiments between his Ministers and the Nation was indispensable to the happiness of the People under his Government, and that this concurrence did not exist. He replied that his determination was immovable, and dissolved the Assembly.

A new election was held; and so odious throughout the Nation were the measures of the Court, that of the two hundred and twenty-one members who had signed the address against the Ministers, more than two hundred were re-elected. The Opposition had also gained an accession of numbers in the remaining part of the Deputations, and it was apparent that upon the meeting of the Assembly the Court party could not be sustained.

At this crisis, Charles the Tenth, as if resolved to leave himself not the shadow of a pretext to complain of his expulsion from the throne, in defiance of the Charter to the observance of which he had solemnly sworn, issued at one and the same time four Ordinances—the first of which suspended the liberty of the Press, and prohibited the publication of all the daily newspapers and other periodical journals but by license, revocable at pleasure, and renewable every three months; the second annulled the election of Deputies which had just taken place; the third changed the mode of election prescribed by law, and reduced nearly by one-half the numbers of the House of Deputies to be elected; and the fourth commanded the new elections to be held, and fixed a day for the meeting of the Assembly to be so constituted.

These Ordinances were the immediate occasion of the last Revolution of the three days, terminating in the final expulsion of Charles the Tenth from the throne, and of himself and his family from the Territory of France. This was effected by an insurrection of the People of Paris, which burst forth by spontaneous and unpremeditated movement on the very day of the

promulgation of the four Ordinances. The first of these, the suppression of all the daily newspapers, seemed as if studiously devised to provoke instantaneous resistance, and the conflict of physical force. Had Charles the Tenth issued a decree to shut up all the bake-houses of Paris, it could not have been more fatal to his authority. The conductors of the proscribed journals, by mutual engagement among themselves, determined to consider the Ordinance as unlawful, null, and void; and this was to all the classes of the people the signal of resistance. The publishers of two of the journals, summoned immediately before the Judicial Tribunal, were justified in their resistance by the sentence of the court, pronouncing the Ordinance null and void. A Marshal of France receives the commands of the King, to disperse by force of arms the population of Paris; but the spontaneous resurrection of the National Guard organizes at once an army to defend the liberties of the Nation. Lafayette is again called from his retreat at La Grange, and by the unanimous voice of the people, confirmed by such Deputies of the Legislative Assembly as were able to meet for common consultation at that trying emergency, is again placed at the head of the National Guard as their Commander-in-chief. He assumed the command on the second day of the conflict, and on the third Charles the Tenth had ceased to reign. He formally abdicated the Crown, and his son, the Duke d'Angouleme, renounced his pretensions to the succession. But, humble imitators of Napoleon, even in submitting to their own degradation, they clung to the last grasp of hereditary sway, by transmitting all their claim of dominion to the orphan child of the Duke of Berri.



At an early stage of the Revolution of 1789, Lafayette had declared it as a principle that insurrection against tyrants was the most sacred of duties. He had borrowed this sentiment, perhaps, from the motto of Jefferson—"Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." The principle itself is as sound as its enunciation is daring. Like all general maxims it is susceptible of very dangerous abuses: the test of its truth is exclusively in the correctness of its application. As forming a part of the political creed of Lafayette it has been severely criticised; nor can it be denied that, in the experience of the French Revolutions, the cases in which popular insurrection has been resorted to for the extinction of existing authority, have been so frequent, so unjustifiable in their causes, so atrocious in their execution, so destructive to liberty in their consequences, that the friends of Freedom who know that she can exist only under the supremacy of the law, have sometimes felt themselves constrained to shrink from the development of abstract truth in the dread of the danger with which she is surrounded.

In the revolution of the three days of 1830, it was the steady, calm, but inflexible adherence of Lafayette to this maxim which decided the fate of the Bourbons. After the struggles of the People had commenced, and even while liberty and power were grappling with each other for life or death, the Deputies elect to the Legislative Assembly, then at Paris, held several meetings at the house of their colleague, Lafitte, and elsewhere, at which the question of resistance against the Ordinances was warmly debated, and aversion to that resistance by force was the sentiment predominant in the minds of a majority of the members.

The hearts of some of the most ardent patriots quailed within them at the thought of another overthrow of the Monarchy. All the horrible recollections of the reign of terror, the massacre of the prisons in September, the butcheries of the guillotine from year to year, the headless trunks of Brissot, and Danton, and Robespierre, and last, not least, the iron crown and sceptre of Napoleon himself, rose in hideous succession before them, and haunted their imaginations. They detested the Ordinances, but hoped that by negotiation and remonstrance with the recreant King, it might yet be possible to obtain the revocation of them, and the substitution of a more liberal Ministry. This deliberation was not concluded till Lafayette appeared among them. From that moment the die was cast. They had till then no military leader. Louis Philippe of Orleans had not then been seen among them.

In all the changes of Government in France, from the first Assembly of Notables to that day, there never had been an act of authority presenting a case for the fair and just application of the *duty* of resistance against oppression so clear, so unquestionable, so flagrant as this. The violations of the Charter were so gross and palpable that the most determined Royalist could not deny them. The mask had been laid aside. The sword of despotism had been drawn and the scabbard cast away. A King, openly forsworn, had forfeited every claim to allegiance; and the only resource of the Nation against him was resistance by force. This was the opinion of Lafayette, and he declared himself ready to take the command of the National Guard, should the wish of the People, already declared thus to place him at the head

of this spontaneous movement, be confirmed by his colleagues of the Legislative Assembly. The appointment was accordingly conferred upon him, and the second day afterwards Charles the Tenth and his family were fugitives to a foreign land.

France was without a Government. She might then have constituted herself a Republic; and such was, undoubtedly, the aspiration of a very large portion of her population. But with another and yet larger portion of her People, the name of Republic was identified with the memory of Robespierre. It was held in execration; there was imminent danger, if not absolute certainty, that the attempt to organize a Republic would have been the signal for a new civil war. The name of a Republic, too, was hateful to all the neighbors of France; to the Confederacy of Emperors and Kings which have twice replaced the Bourbons upon the throne, and who might be propitiated under the disappointment and mortification of the result, by the retention of the name of King and the substitution of the semblance of a Bourbon for the reality.

The People of France, like the Cardinal de Retz, more than two centuries before, *wanted* a descendant from Henry the Fourth, who could speak the language of the Parisian populace, and who had known what it was to be a Plebeian. They found him in the person of Louis Philippe of Orleans. Lafayette himself was compelled to compromise with his principles, purely and simply republican, and to accept him, first, as Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom and then as hereditary King. There was perhaps in this determination, besides the motives which



operated upon others, a consideration of disinterested delicacy which could be applicable only to himself. If the Republic should be proclaimed, he knew that the Chief Magistracy could be delegated only to himself. It must have been a Chief Magistracy for life, which at his age could only have been for a short term of years. Independent of the extreme dangers and difficulties to himself, to his family, and to his country, in which the position which he would have occupied might have involved them, the inquiry could not escape his forecast, who upon his demise could be his successor? and what must be the position occupied by him? If at that moment he had but spoken the word he might have closed his career with a Crown upon his head, and with a withering blast upon his name to the end of time.

With the Duke of Orleans himself he used no concealment or disguise. When the Crown was offered to that Prince and he looked to Lafayette for consultation, "you know (said he) that I am of the *American school*, and partial to the Constitution of the United States." So, it seems was Louis Philippe. "I think with you," said he. "It is impossible to pass two years in the United States without being convinced that their Government is the best in the world. But do you think it suited to our our present circumstances and condition?" "No," replied Lafayette. "They require a Monarchy surrounded by popular institutions." So thought also Louis Philippe; and he accepted the Crown under the conditions upon which it was tendered to him.

Lafayette retained the command of the National Guard so

long as it was essential to the settlement of the new order of things on the basis of order and of freedom ; so long as it was essential to control the stormy and excited passions of the Parisian People ; so long as it was necessary to save the Ministers of the guilty but fallen Monarch from the rash and revengeful resentments of their conquerors. When this was accomplished, and the People had been preserved from the calamity of shedding in peace the blood of war, he once more resigned his command, retired in privacy to La Grange, and resumed his post as a Deputy in the Legislative Assembly, which he continued to hold till the close of life.

His station there was still at the head of the phalanx, supporters of liberal principles and of constitutional freedom. In Spain, in Portugal, in Italy, and, above all, in Poland, the cause of liberty has been struggling against the hand of power, and to the last hour of his life they found in Lafayette a never-failing friend and patron.

In his last illness, the standing which he held in the hearts of mankind was attested by the formal resolution of the House of Deputies, met to make inquiries concerning his condition ; and, dying, as he did, full of years and of glory, never in the history of mankind, has a private individual departed more universally lamented by the whole generation of men whom he has left behind.

Such, *Legislators of the North American Confederate Union*, was the life of GILBERT MOTIER DE LAFAYETTE, and the record

of his life is the delineation of his character. Consider him as one human being of one thousand millions, his cotemporaries on the surface of the terraqueous globe. Among that thousand millions seek for an object of comparison with him; assume for the standard of comparison all the virtues which exalt the character of man above that of the brute creation; take the ideal man, little lower than the angels; mark the qualities of the mind and heart which entitle him to this station of pre-eminence in the scale of created beings, and inquire who that lived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the Christian æra, combined in himself so many of those qualities, so little alloyed with those which belong to that earthly vesture of decay in which the immortal spirit is enclosed—as Lafayette.

Pronounce him one of the first men of his age, and you have yet not done him justice. Try him by that test to which he sought in vain to stimulate the vulgar and selfish spirit of Napoleon; class him among the men who, to compare and seat themselves, must take in the compass of *all ages*; turn back your eyes upon the records of time; summon from the creation of the world to this day the mighty dead of every age and every clime—and where, among the race of merely mortal men, shall one be found, who, as the benefactor of his kind, shall claim to take precedence of Lafayette!

There have doubtless been, in all ages, men, whose discoveries or inventions, in the world of matter or of mind, have opened new avenues to the dominion of man over the material creation; have increased his means or his faculties of enjoy-



ment; have raised him in nearer approximation to that higher and happier condition, the object of his hopes and aspirations in his present state of existence.

Lafayette discovered no new principle of politics or of morals. He invented nothing in science. He disclosed no new phenomenon in the laws of nature. Born and educated in the highest order of feudal Nobility, under the most absolute Monarchy of Europe, in possession of an affluent fortune, and master of himself and of all his capabilities at the moment of attaining manhood, the principle of republican justice and of social equality took possession of his heart and mind, as if by inspiration from above. He devoted himself, his life, his fortune, his hereditary honors, his towering ambition, his splendid hopes, all to the cause of liberty. He came to another hemisphere to defend her. He became one of the most effective champions of our Independence; but, that once achieved, he returned to his own country, and thenceforward took no part in the controversies which have divided us. In the events of our Revolution, and in the forms of policy which we have adopted for the establishment and perpetuation of our freedom, Lafayette found the most perfect form of government. He wished to add nothing to it. *He would gladly have abstracted nothing from it.* Instead of the imaginary Republic of Plato, or the Utopia of Sir Thomas More, he took a practical existing model, in actual operation here, and never attempted or wished more than to apply it faithfully to his own country.

It was not given to Moses to enter the promised land; but

he saw it from the summit of Pisgah. It was not given to Lafayette to witness the consummation of his wishes in the establishment of a Republic, and the extinction of all hereditary rule in France. His principles were in advance of the age and hemisphere in which he lived. A Bourbon still reigns on the throne of France, and it is not for us to scrutinize the title by which he reigns. The principles of elective and hereditary power, blended in reluctant union in his person, like the red and white roses of York and Lancaster, may postpone to aftertime the last conflict to which they must ultimately come. The life of the Patriarch was not long enough for the development of his whole political system. Its final accomplishment is in the womb of time.

The anticipation of this event is the more certain, from the consideration that all the principles for which Lafayette contended were practical. He never indulged himself in wild and fanciful speculations. The principle of hereditary power was, in his opinion, the bane of all republican liberty in Europe. Unable to extinguish it in the Revolution of 1830, so far as concerned the Chief Magistracy of the Nation, Lafayette had the satisfaction of seeing it abolished with reference to the Peerage. An hereditary Crown, stript of the support which it may derive from an hereditary Peerage, however compatible with Asiatic despotism, is an anomaly in the history of the Christian world, and in the theory of free Government. There is no argument producible against the existence of an hereditary Peerage, but applies with aggravated weight against the transmission from sire to son of an hereditary Crown. The

prejudices and passions of the People of France rejected the principle of inherited power, in every station of public trust, excepting the first and highest of them all; but there they clung to it, as did the Israelites of old to the savory deities of Egypt.

This is not the time or the place for a disquisition upon the comparative merits, as a system of government, of a Republic, and a Monarchy surrounded by republican institutions. Upon this subject there is among us no diversity of opinion; and if it should take the People of France another half century of internal and external war, of dazzling and delusive glories; of unparalleled triumphs, humiliating reverses, and bitter disappointments, to settle it to their satisfaction, the ultimate result can only bring them to the point where we have stood from the day of the Declaration of Independence—to the point where Lafayette would have brought them, and to which he looked as a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Then, too, and then only, will be the time when the character of Lafayette will be appreciated at its true value throughout the civilized world. When the principle of hereditary dominion shall be extinguished in all the institutions of France; when Government shall no longer be considered as property transmissible from sire to son, but as a trust committed for a limited time, and then to return to the People whence it came; as a burdensome duty to be discharged and not as a reward to be abused; when a claim, any claim to political power by *inheritance* shall, in the estimation of the whole French People,



be held as it now is by the whole People of the North American Union—then will be the time for contemplating the character of Lafayette, not merely in the events of his life, but, in the full development of his intellectual conceptions, of his fervent aspirations, of the labors and perils and sacrifices of his long and eventful career upon earth; and thenceforward, till the hour when the trump of the Archangel shall sound to announce that Time shall be no more, the name of Lafayette shall stand enrolled upon the annals of our race, high on the list of the pure and disinterested benefactors of mankind.

## APPENDIX.

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### PROCEEDINGS IN CONGRESS.

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#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

June 21, 1834.

Mr. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS moved the following resolution:—

*Resolved*, That a committee be appointed on the part of this house, to join such committee as may be appointed on the part of the Senate, to consider and report by what token of respect and affection it may be proper for the Congress of the United States to express the deep sensibility of the Nation to the event of the decease of General LAFAYETTE.

The resolution being read, the question was put, that the house do agree thereto, and passed in the affirmative unanimously. It was then

*Ordered*, That the committee on the part of this house consist of one member from each state; and

Mr. JOHN Q. ADAMS, of Massachusetts,

M<sup>C</sup>INTYRE of Maine,

HUBBARD, of New Hampshire,

BURGESS, of Rhode Island;

BARBER, of Connecticut,

ALLEN, of Vermont,

CAMBRELENG, of New York,

PARKER, of New Jersey,

MUHLBURG, of Pennsylvania,

MILLIGAN, of Delaware,

M<sup>C</sup>KIM, of Maryland,

ARCHER, of Virginia,

Mr. WILLIAMS, of North Carolina,

PINCKNEY, of South Carolina,

WAYNE, of Georgia,

JOHNSON, of Kentucky,

BLAIR, of Tennessee,

WHITTLESEY, of Ohio,

THOMAS, of Louisiana,

CARR, of Indiana,

CAGE, of Mississippi,

DUNCAN, of Illinois,

MURPHY, of Alabama,

ASHLEY, of Missouri,

were appointed the committee on the part of the House.

*Ordered*, That the clerk request the concurrence of the Senate in the said resolution.

A message from the Senate, by Mr. Lowrie, their secretary:

*Mr. Speaker*,—The Senate have passed the resolution for the appointment of a joint committee “to consider and report by what token of respect and affection it may be proper for the Congress of the United States to express the deep sensibility of the Nation to the event of the decease of General LAFAYETTE,” and have appointed a committee on their part.

The committee on the part of the Senate are—

MR. WEBSTER,  
WHITE,  
CALHOUN,  
CLAY,  
FORSYTH,  
WILKINS,  
TYLER,

MR. BENTON,  
POINDEXTER,  
KING, of Alabama,  
CHAMBERS,  
BROWN, and  
SHEPLEY.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

June 24, 1834.

MR. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, from the joint committee appointed on the 21st instant “to consider and report by what token of respect and affection it may be proper for the Congress of the United States to express the deep sensibility of the nation to the event of the decease of General LAFAYETTE,” reported the following joint resolutions:—

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That the two houses of Congress have received with the profoundest sensibility, intelligence of the death of General LAFAYETTE, the friend of the United States, the friend of WASHINGTON, and the friend of Liberty.



*And be it further resolved,* That the sacrifices and efforts of this illustrious person in the cause of our country, during her struggle for Independence, and the affectionate interest which he has at all times manifested for the success of her political institutions, claim from the government and people of the United States an expression of condolence for his loss, veneration for his virtues, and gratitude for his services.

*And be it further resolved,* That the President of the United States be requested to address, together with a copy of the above resolutions, a letter to GEORGE WASHINGTON LAFAYETTE, and the other members of his family, assuring them of the condolence of this whole nation in their irreparable bereavement.

*And be it further resolved,* That the members of the two houses of congress will wear a badge of mourning for thirty days; and that it be recommended to the people of the United States to wear a similar badge for the same period.

*And be it further resolved,* That the Halls of the Houses be dressed in mourning for the residue of the session.

*And be it further resolved,* That JOHN QUINCY ADAMS be requested to deliver an oration on the life and character of General LAFAYETTE, before the two houses of Congress, at the next session.

The said resolutions were read three times successively, and passed unanimously,

A message from the Senate, by Mr. Lowrie, their secretary:

*Mr. Speaker,*—The Senate have passed, *unanimously*, the resolution manifesting the sensibility of the two Houses of Congress and of the nation on the occasion of the decease of General LAFAYETTE.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

December 9, 1834.

On motion of Mr. HUBBARD,

*Resolved,* That a committee be appointed on the part of this house, to join such committee as may be appointed on the part of the Senate, to consider and report the arrangements necessary to be adopted in order to carry into effect the last resolution reported on the 24th June, 1834, by the joint committee appointed at the last session of congress, on the occasion of the death of General LAFAYETTE.

Mr. HUBBARD, Mr. LINCOLN, Mr. WHITE, Mr. ALLEN, of Virginia, and Mr. MARSHALL, were appointed the said committee.

*Ordered*, That the clerk acquaint the Senate therewith.

The Senate concurred in the foregoing resolution, December 15, 1834; and Mr. CLAY, Mr. WHITE, Mr. CALHOUN, Mr. WEBSTER, and Mr. BUCHANAN, were appointed the committee on their part.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*December 23, 1834.*

Mr. HUBBARD, from the select joint committee appointed to consider and report what measures were necessary to give effect to the resolutions adopted at the last session for paying suitable honors to the memory of General LAFAYETTE, reported the following resolution:—

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*, That Wednesday, the thirty-first instant, be the time assigned for the delivery of the oration by JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, before the two Houses of Congress, on the life and character of General LAFAYETTE.

That the two houses shall be called to order by their respective presiding officers at the usual hour, and the journal of the preceding day shall be read; but all legislative business shall be suspended on that day.

That the oration shall be delivered at half-past twelve o'clock, in the hall of the House of Representatives.

That the President of the United States and the heads of the several departments, the French Minister and members of the French Legation, all other foreign ministers at the seat of government, and the members of their respective legations, be invited to attend on that occasion by the chairman of the joint committee.

That the President of the United States, the heads of the several departments, the French Minister and members of the French Legation, the other foreign ministers at the seat of government, and the members of their respective legations, and JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, be requested to assemble at half-past twelve o'clock, P. M., in the Senate Chamber, and that they, with the Senate shall be attended by the joint committee to the hall of the House of Representatives.

That the galleries of the House, under the direction of its officers, shall be open on that day for the accommodation of such citizens as may think proper to attend;

Which was agreed to by the House.

*Ordered*, That the clerk acquaint the Senate therewith.

The Senate concurred in the foregoing resolution.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*December 31, 1834.*

In pursuance of the arrangements reported by the joint committee appointed on the 9th December instant, to consider and report the arrangements necessary to be adopted to carry into effect the last resolution reported on the 24th June, 1834, by the joint committee appointed at the last session of Congress, on the occasion of the death of General LAFAYETTE, the hall was prepared for the reception of the Senate, and for the guests invited, in accordance with the said arrangements.

At forty minutes past twelve o'clock the Senate of the United States, preceded by the Vice President and its officers, the President of the United States, the heads of the several Executive Departments, the Ministers of sundry foreign nations at the seat of Government, and the members of their respective Legations, and JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, entered the hall of the House, and took the seats prepared for them, respectively. Mr. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS was conducted to the Speaker's chair by the committee of arrangements, when the Speaker withdrew, and took a seat at the clerk's table with the Vice President.

Mr. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS then rose, and delivered an



Oration on the Life and Character of General LAFAYETTE; and having, at half-past three o'clock, P. M., concluded the same,

The Senate, the President of the United States, the heads of Departments, and the Foreign Ministers and Legations, withdrew;

When the Speaker resumed his seat.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

January 2, 1835.

The following joint resolution was offered by Mr. HUBBARD:

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives,* That the thanks of Congress be presented to JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, for the appropriate Oration delivered by him on the Life and Character of General LAFAYETTE, in the Representatives' Hall, before both Houses of Congress, on the 31st day of December, 1834, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

*Resolved,* That the chairmen of the joint committee appointed to make the necessary arrangements to carry into effect the resolution of the last session of this Congress in relation to the death of General LAFAYETTE, be requested to communicate to Mr. ADAMS the foregoing resolution, receive his answer thereto, and present the same to both Houses of Congress.

The resolution was agreed to, *nem. dis.*

*Ordered,* That the Clerk request the concurrence of the Senate therein.

The Senate concurred in the foregoing resolution.

#### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

January 6, 1835.

Mr. HUBBARD, from the select joint committee appointed on the 2d instant, to deliver the thanks of Congress to JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, for his appropriate Oration on the Life and Character of LAFAYETTE, reported the following correspondence:—

To the HON. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS:

SIR,—We have the honor to present to you official copies of two joint resolutions adopted by the Senate and House of Representatives on the 2d instant, expressing the thanks of Congress for the appropriate Oration delivered

by you in the Hall of the House of Representatives on the 31st ultimo, on the Life and Character of General LAFAYETTE; and authorizing a request to be made to you for a copy of it for publication.

Having shared the high gratification of hearing the Oration, we take pleasure, in pursuance of the second of the joint resolutions, in requesting you to furnish a copy of the Oration for publication.

We have the honor to be, with great respect,

Your obedient servants,

HENRY CLAY,

*Chairman of Committee on part of Senate.*

HENRY HUBBARD,

*Chairman of Committee on part of House.*

JAN. 5, 1835.

To Messrs. HENRY CLAY and HENRY HUBBARD, Chairmen of the Joint Committee of Arrangements of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, to carry into effect the resolution of Congress in relation to the death of General LAFAYETTE:

GENTLEMEN,—I receive with deep sensibility your communication of the joint resolution of both Houses of Congress upon the Oration delivered before them on the Life and Character of LAFAYETTE.

The kind indulgence with which they have accepted the endeavor to give effect to their purpose of paying a last tribute of national gratitude and affection to the memory of a great benefactor of our country, will be impressed upon my heart to the last hour of my life.

With this sentiment I shall take pleasure in furnishing, as requested, a copy of the Address for publication.

I am, gentlemen, with the highest respect,

Your fellow-citizen, and obedient servant,

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

Mr. HUBBARD submitted the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas it was resolved, at the last session of Congress, that JOHN QUINCY ADAMS be requested to deliver an Oration on the Life and Character of General LAFAYETTE, before the two Houses of Congress: and, in pursuance of that resolution, and sundry other resolutions which have been subsequently adopted, Mr. ADAMS, on Wednesday, the 31st day of December, 1834, in the Hall of the House of Representatives, and in the presence of both Houses of Congress, and also in the presence of the President of the United States, of the heads of the respective Departments of the National Government, and of a most numerous assembly of citizens, did deliver an Oration replete with those pure and patriotic sentiments which will be sacredly cherished by every true and enlightened American: The House of Representatives, fully satisfied with the manner in which Mr. ADAMS has performed the duty assigned him, and

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On motion of Mr. CLAY,

*Ordered,* That ten thousand copies be printed for the use of  
the Senate.



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